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Long Tso taken from her home. Page 21.

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THE

CHINESE SLAVE-GIRL:

A STORY OF WOMAN'S LIFE IN CHINA.

BY THE
REV. J. A. DAVIS,
FORMERLY OF AMOY, CHINA.

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PREFACE.

A BOOK, it is presumed, will have a preface, as a dress-coat is expected to have two unused buttons —with this difference: the buttons are *af*-fixed, the preface *pre*-fixed. The reason is the same in each case: that is the way in which books and coats are usually made. As to use, tradition says that the supernumerary buttons once had a service to perform; so a preface was of value once: it was read. Both are now kept embalmed in open tombs.

As some readers of *The Chinese Slave-Girl* may possibly turn back from the end of the last chapter to see what the author has to say in the "Preface," we add a few words out of respect to them.

This narrative is not, strictly speaking, a true story, but the chief incidents are actual occurrences, related to the author by those who knew them to be facts, or which came under his own observation during a residence in China. The

characters are taken from real life, several being personally known to the writer. The customs and superstitions are such as prevail in Southern China. The chapters relating to mission-work are narrations of actual occurrences previous to or during the residence of the author in that country. The story, in brief, is a series of facts joined together by the writer with threads taken from his own observation and experience.

The object of the story is to give a fair view of woman's life among the lower and middle classes in Southern China. If there be an exaggeration or overstatement, the writer is unconscious of it. In some cases he is certain that the truth would warrant even stronger statements than those here given.

It only remains to be said that the tale is told in a style suited to young rather than to mature readers, because it was at the request of children that it was written, and its especial object is to interest the young in the people and the women of China.

THE

CHINESE SLAVE-GIRL.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHINESE BABY.

BESIDE one of the small rivers in Southern China, and not many miles from the ocean, stands a little village. The houses are low and only one story in height. They have no chimneys or windows, and what answer for windows are one or two holes about two feet square with wooden bars across to keep out thieves. Through these windows and a narrow door in each house comes all the light and air that the people living within can get. Inside are no whitewashed walls, no papering—nothing but the rafters and tiled roof overhead, the bare walls on the sides, and the tile floor below. A few wooden chairs or stools, a table, a few dishes, a small earthen furnace, an iron pan, a skillet, and two or three platforms of boards on benches with a thick quilt or blanket to serve as beds, are about all the furniture that these houses have.

The tiles of the floor and roof are of a dark, brick-red color, and the walls are dark with smoke; so that the houses which are not newly built look more like farmers' smoke-houses than like homes in which people live. Poor as these homes are, there are many much worse in China, and thousands—even millions—of people there have no houses at all. Many thousands live in boats on the water, and thousands have not even a boat-home, but a mere shelter to cover them at night; and probably many have not even a roof to hide them from the storm.

This village, like many others in Southern China, is built on the south side of a hill and under a great banyan tree, that, like an immense mother-hen, spreads its wing-limbs over the chick-houses. The hill keeps off the chilly winds of winter, and the tree shades the people in summer.

Before one of these houses, many years ago, two little boys sat talking.

"Seng," said one, "what do you think father and mother will do with our little girl-baby? I wish they would keep it, don't you?"

"Yes," said Seng; "but I am afraid they will not. I saw Lim Sai the other day—he has been to outer lands, you know—and he told me that they don't kill, or even sell, little girls in those countries. I wish that we lived there; then we poor boys might have sisters too."

"If we ask father very much, he may let us

keep our baby," said Iau, the other boy. "Mother wants to keep it. I heard her ask father yesterday not to have it killed. Why do people kill little girls? Why can they not live as well as boys?"

"I will tell you," said Seng, who was the older: "there is not enough rice to eat for all, so somebody must be killed, or many would starve; and because men do not like little girls they kill them instead of boys. So Uncle Beng told me."

"Perhaps, if you and I eat less, father will let us keep our little girl," said Iau. "I will ask him when he comes home."

That night, when the father came in from his work, Iau, who was playing with the baby, went to him and said,

"Father, will you let us keep our baby?"

The father patted his boy's head, for he loved his children, and said,

"Little Iau might have to eat his rice very thin and might starve if we kept this baby. We cannot spare him."

"But, father," pleaded the little fellow, "she is so small that she will hardly need anything to eat for some years. By that time Seng and I will be men, and able to earn enough for us all. It is our only baby. Please do not give it away."

"My son," said the father, "I would like to keep it, but I cannot earn enough now to feed us all; and if a drought comes, the price of rice will be much more, and then we must starve."

"Father, Seng and I will eat very little rice if you will let us keep this baby, and we will leave more than she needs."

"Perhaps there will not be a drought," said Seng. "Will you let us keep it, father, until a drought does come?"

"Yes," said Iau; "wait and see if one does come."

The mother said nothing, for she knew that if her boys were refused she would be; yet her anxious look told how the mother's heart yearned for the little one.

Little Iau went back to the child, and, putting his arms under its head, lifted it up as he said,

"Look, father! is it not a nice baby? What pretty black eyes it has! How they wink at the light! And see the little hands, how small they are! You will not give our baby away to strange people, will you, father? They would not love it as we do, because it would not be theirs; it is ours, and they might let it die. You do not want our little girl to die, do you, father?"

Either Iau's words or the father's own heart made him say,

"We will keep the baby—at least, until drought comes."

Those were two happy boys who bent over their little sister as they fondled and called her loving pet names when they knew she was to be kept. And a few days after, the happy mother showed

how thankful she was when she went to the little village-temple and offered her thanks to the idol for sparing the child to her. She prayed that no drought might come until her child was grown, and promised, if the little one was spared to her, to give a fine dish of fruits and food to the god once each month.

One day a neighbor came in to call and asked,

"Do you mean to keep your child?"

"Yes," said the mother; "it is our only girl, and its father has promised that we may keep it—at least, until a drought. I hope none will come."

"Lin So's baby is gone, you know," said the neighbor.

"Why did they not keep it? They are not poor, and could easily bring up all of their children," said the mother.

"Lin said that it did not pay to bring up girls. Men can get wives for so little money now that he could not afford to raise girls for wives. He said that if he could keep his girls at home as long as he lived he would not have them taken away, but, the rule of our nation being to have every girl married as soon as she is grown up, he did not see any use in caring for his girls at all. Lin So, his wife, did not seem to care much. If I had any girls, I would rather have them killed than sold for slaves."

"I do not think so," said the mother. "And if I knew that my child had to be the slave of some man after a while, I would rather keep her—

until that time, any way—than to have her killed. Oh, it is awful to think of killing one's own flesh and blood! I do not see how any father can do it, or mother consent to it. If the child becomes a slave, its slave-time lasts only until it is married, and during that time the mother may see her child again, but when it is killed the mother can never, never press her child to her heart again."

"That may be true," said the neighbor; "but rather than have my own flesh and blood abused, and almost killed, as the slave of some cruel man, and afterward become the wife, or only the second or third wife, of some one who does not care for her, I would willingly see my child killed. It would at least be out of misery."

"But it is wrong," said the other, "to kill our girls. The officers of government often put out proclamations forbidding it."

"That is true," replied the neighbor; "yet we all know that they do not try to find out who does it, and, if they did know, would not punish any one for killing girls. Besides, the very officers who make the proclamations may have killed their own children."

"We know that the great and good men of the kingdom write many books and tracts to teach the people not to kill their offspring, and they know better than we what is right," answered the mother.

"Few can read their books, and those few do not take the trouble to teach the many people who

cannot read. If all could read, there are two other books ever before us that all can understand: nearly all of us are poor and hardly know how to get food for the mouths of those who live, and women and girls are not counted in our country. We all read and understand those books."

CHAPTER II.

SOLD AS A SLAVE.

IN some parts of China, especially the southern portion, the country is so crowded with people that the land cannot produce enough to feed the multitudes. Though nearly every spot of ground that can be used is planted or sown—even the hillsides being terraced—and though from two to four crops are produced in a year from the same field, yet even then many poor must suffer because there is not enough food for them. In the best seasons it is not uncommon to hear of people dying of starvation. It is true there is food to be bought, but the price is sometimes beyond the reach of the poorest people. Often there come severe droughts, and for many months no rain falls; then, one, two, or even more, crops failing, famine and starvation come. Hundreds and thousands die because they have not money enough to buy food, and sometimes because there is no food to buy. If there were good roads and conveyances for carrying grain, it could be brought from districts where it is abundant; but there

are few good roads, and so one province suffers famine whilst others have plenty.

For more than three years the rainy season came and abundance of rain fell, and during the summer occasional showers kept the wells and streams supplied with water. But when Leng Tso—for thus the little girl was named—was nearly four years old, there came a dreadful drought. The rainy season passed by, and not enough rain fell to fill the wells and streams. The farmers had planted the first crop of rice, and from the half-filled wells and low streams flooded all the rice-fields for a week or two. But each day the water in the wells and streams grew less, and by and by not half of the fields could be flooded. The farmers closed the little canals farthest away from the wells or streams leading the water from field to field, in the hope that those rice-fields nearest the water might be saved, but in vain.

One after another the streams stopped, the wells gave out, and the rice-fields, no longer flooded every day, soon became dry, and opened in great cracks around the bunches of rice. Long before it was time the rice ripened, but there was no grain in the heads, and without threshing it the farmers stowed away the empty straw. Day by day the people looked for rain, and day after day they went to the temples to pray to the gods that rain might come. The officers of the government sent orders through the country forbidding the people

to kill any animal or eat any meat, because, they said, the gods were angry with the people for taking life.

As no rain fell, it was useless to plant or do any work in the field—nothing could grow; so poor people had no work. The price of rice rose more and more. All crops failed, and every kind of food became scarce and very dear.

One day Leng Tso's father came home more sad than ever.

"We will soon have nothing to eat," said he. "My money is nearly gone, and I can earn no more. Even if I could get work, the price of food is so high that I could not earn enough to keep five mouths from starving." He had said nothing about giving Leng Tso away, for he, like the rest, had learned to love the little girl. But now, as she happened to be out of the house, he said, "There is no other way: we must sell Leng Tso."

"Oh, must my little darling be sold?" said the mother as she turned away to hide her sorrow. Distress had made the child dearer than ever now.

Tau, who heard what was said, came to his father, and, looking up into his face, asked,

"Father, do you mean to sell our little Leng Tso?"

"We must do something, my boy," said the father, "or we will all starve."

"But why need you sell her?" said the little fellow. "What will become of her then? Perhaps we will never see her again. Don't sell our little sister, father. She is the only one we have. If you will let us keep her, Seng and I will eat very little. We will eat only once a day."

"My child," said the father, "we shall soon have nothing to eat at all, and then we must all die. If we sell Leng Tso, she will be fed and live, and we shall be able to buy food with the money and live too."

"Father," said the boy, "if some one must be sold, then sell me. I am bigger than Leng Tso, and will bring more money; besides, it will take less to feed her than me."

"My poor boy," said Iau's father, "we cannot let you go. Besides, you are too old for any one to adopt, and you know that nobody will buy boys for anything else. No; we must sell our little girl: there is no other way."

A few days after, a strange man came to take little Leng Tso away. He had given six dollars to the father for her, and now she must be a little slave-girl. She could have no father, no mother, no brothers, no home, to call her own. The poor mother dared not refuse to give up her child to the stranger. What her husband did or said was law to her, but his word could not make the mother love the little girl less. She begged the new master to let her have her child for a few minutes

longer. She took the little one before the ancestral tablet, and, the two kneeling together, the mother prayed the spirit of the dead, who was supposed to be in the tablet, to take care of her little girl and bring her back again to the mother's heart. She prayed the spirit to make the drought pass away soon and to make them rich, so that they might buy back their child. Then, taking Leng Tso out of the house to the stranger, who was waiting, the mother threw her arms around the little one, and, pressing the child closely to her heart in one long last embrace of mother's love, she cried,

"*Goa e simkoa, goa e simkoa u sit-loh!*" ("My heart, my heart have lost.")

Little Leng Tso could not understand the meaning of all this. But when the strange man took her to carry her off, she struggled hard to be free and screamed to her mother to take her away from him. In spite of all her struggles and cries she was carried away, while the poor mother stood at the door wringing her hands and crying, "*Goa e simkoa, goa e simkoa!*"

After telling the stranger which was the child the father went away, as though he did not dare to see the sorrow of separation. But the two boys, when they saw that their little sister had been sold to a stranger, were too frightened to do anything except cry. What a father does to his children when yet young in China is right in law. He

may sell, or even kill, them, and the law does not punish, or even notice, his act.

When the man carried Leng Tso away the boys ran along, and between their sobs tried to comfort the little girl. Both promised to go every day to the temple to pray for rain, so that their father might get work and buy her back. They promised, too, that if she did not come back before, they would, as soon as they were able, earn money and buy her themselves, and then she should always live with them and their mother; even if a drought came, *they* would not sell her: they would die together first.

When they had gone some distance from the village, the man, who had said little before, now told the boys that if they did not return home at once and stop troubling his slave he would beat them severely; thus he forced them back. As the poor little child saw that she was left entirely alone with the stranger, she screamed as though her heart was broken. She called her brothers, begging them not to let her be carried off, but to take her back to her mother. The master, instead of trying to soothe and comfort her, slapped her several times in the face, and told her to be still or he would whip her to death. Half dead with terror, the little girl tried to be still, but could not keep back the sobs that would come, nor could she help the low cry that every little while forced itself from her almost breaking heart.

After walking a mile or two the man came to

another village along the water. Here lay a boat ready to start up the river. Into this he took Leng Tso, and soon they were on their way up stream. There was no wind, and the boatmen had to row and push the boat against the current. All day long, stopping now and again to rest or to eat, they were slowly forcing their way up the river. When night came the boat was anchored in the middle of the stream, and the boatmen and Leng Tso's master fell asleep.

There was an old woman on the boat who had begged the boatmen to take her along, and to this woman the owner of Leng Tso had given the charge of the little girl. She had tried to comfort and soothe the little one and get her to talk, but the child would only say again and again, "I want my mother." As night came on the wearied child laid her head on the kind old woman's lap and went to sleep.

Very early the next morning Leng Tso was awakened by the boatmen, who had hoisted anchor and were pushing their boat up the river. She looked around and began crying and calling for her mother. The old woman who had been so kind to her the night before now awoke and tried to quiet the child. By and by she succeeded so far that Leng Tso listened as So Chim—for that was the old woman's name—asked who her mother was and where she lived.

"Don't you know my mother?" said the child.

"I know her. She is *my* mother; and she is Seng's mother, and Iau's mother too. She lives at home. Will you take me to her? I don't want to go with that bad man; he hurt me."

"'Sh-h!" said So Chim; "don't talk so;" and with a nod of her head and a motion of her hand toward Leng Tso's master, who yet lay asleep, the old woman made the child understand that nothing must be said about him while he was near. Then, in a true motherly way, she began to turn the little girl's attention to things around her that she might think less about home. She pointed out the boats going down stream, and told her with what they were loaded. One had a great many large open-work baskets shaped something like immense fruit-cans, only they were large at the bottom and had but a small hole at the top. Each one of these baskets held from six to twenty live chickens, ducks or geese. Another boat had a great many pigs, each one in a long narrow round basket without top or bottom. None of these pigs were tied, and none could get away. Each one seemed as contented and comfortable as though he were going home, and not to market. So Chim told the little girl how the men put these pigs into the baskets. Several of them were driven into pens that were all closed, except that there was one small hole on the side. In this hole one of these baskets was put, with its opening or mouth right in the hole. Then a couple of boys would go into the pen and

pull a pig, by its tail and legs, away from the open basket, and then suddenly let the animal go. As soon as it was loose it would rush to the hole and get caught in the basket; the outside end of the basket being narrower than the other, the pig would be as tight a prisoner as could be.

Leng Tso thought this very funny, and she laughed to think of the foolish pigs who went just the way the men wanted them to go, and yet thought that they were doing just as the men did not wish.

Some distance behind the "pig-boat" came one loaded with bundles of small brush and dried weeds, which the old woman said were taken down to the large city to make fire with for cooking rice. Then came a larger boat loaded with heavy sticks of timber. These, So Chim said, were taken to the great city to be made into boards.

As the little girl was too young to understand much about a Chinese lumber-yard and saw-mill, we will tell the boys and girls who are older what kind of an establishment a Chinese lumber-yard and saw-mill—for they go together—is.

The timber-merchant keeps his lumber in logs until the boards are ordered. These logs he often leaves in the water, though usually he has them on the shore, out of, but not far away from, the water. When any one wants boards he goes to the lumberman and gives the order. Immediately one or more logs are hoisted or rolled upon benches three or more feet in height, and two men, with a saw

very much like our buck or wood-saw, only the frame is at an angle of forty-five degrees with the plane of the saw-blade, go to work to saw the timber into boards. One man stands on the top to pull the saw up, and the other stands or squats under the log to pull the saw down. And this is the only way we have ever seen or heard of boards being sawn from logs in China.

At one place along the bank Leng Tso heard a great clatter. Looking to the spot from which the noise came, she saw two men standing in a frame, by which they were holding with their hands, while with their feet they were treading on blocks fastened to a large stick whose ends were in the sides of the upright frame. By treading on these blocks they made the stick turn round, and over the top of it she saw small square boards running so fast, one after the other, that they could not be counted. These boards were fastened, about a foot apart, on a rope or a jointed stick, and came up through a long square box that reached from the river to the top of the bank. These boards ran down under the box into the water and then back again into the box, and so kept going the round.

"What are they doing there?" asked the little girl.

"They are pumping water out of the river to flood the rice-field," said So Chim.

"But they don't dip the water out of the river

where my mother lives. They dip it out of the wells."

"No," replied So Chim, "that is near the ocean, and the water of the river is salt. It would kill the rice."

When it was nearly noon the boatmen turned their boat toward the shore, and where a path went up from the river fastened the boat to the bank. When Leng Tso's master had paid the boatmen, he turned to the little girl and said,

"Come! we get off here. Come along!" and, without stopping to see whether she followed or not, he walked over the plank to the shore.

Leng Tso stood still and began to cry. No sooner did the man hear her than he turned around and spoke so sharply that the little girl, who had not forgotten the blows of the day before, was still in a moment. As the big tears rolled down her cheeks she put up her little arms to So Chim and said, "Please carry me." The kind old woman, though she had a heavy bundle of her own to carry, stooped down and took Leng Tso also. The little child pressed her face against the wrinkled cheek of So Chim and whispered,

"I want to be with you. I like you. You are good, just as my mother is. Will you take me back to her? She will love you then."

"Not now," said she, "but some day I will try."

After walking for several miles and resting

every little distance—for the man seemed just as willing to rest as did So Chim—the three came to a small village that stood right at the foot of a mountain. Of this village we will tell more in the next chapter.

Every one whom she saw was strange to the little girl, and each one looked at her so sharply that she clung closer to So Chim's hand—for she was walking now—and tried to hide her face in the old woman's dress. She heard the people say in a low voice as she went by, "Ha! Hou Lo has brought another little girl-slave. Wonder if he will kill this one too?" Leng Tso did not understand what they meant, but thought that they were talking about the man whom she was following; and it made her more afraid than ever.

By and by the man stopped at a door, and, opening it, told Leng Tso to go in there, for it was his house. When she saw that So Chim was going on farther, she began to cry and held to her hand, saying,

"Don't go away. Take me home to my mother. Stay with me."

The old woman could only say, "I will come soon and see you," before the man pushed the little girl through the door, and, following, shut it behind him. Then, pushing her through another door, into a room where a woman and a girl were sitting, he said,

"Here is a little slave-girl I have brought.

Whip her if she cries, and make her mind. She will soon be large enough to work."

This woman and girl were the wife and daughter of Hou, the master of Leng Tso, and they seemed nearly as much afraid of him as the little girl was. Neither of them said anything—for they had learned long ago that the less they said to him the better—but both looked so closely at the child that she began again to cry. One look from the man and a sharp word, "Still!" made her silent.

After eating, Hou went out; then the woman brought the child a bowl of rice and a pair of chopsticks and told her to eat. She ate all the rice, for she was very hungry, as she had eaten nothing since she was taken away from home. On the way she had felt too badly to eat the food her master offered. Night came soon, though the time seemed very long to Leng Tso; and after eating another bowl of rice she was told to go to sleep.

On two benches in a small room lay some boards, and on these were a large Chinese "pay" (a kind of thick quilt or "comfortable") and a small bamboo frame for a pillow: this was Leng Tso's bed. But as the poor Chinese rarely have a better —if, indeed, as good—bed, this one did not seem very bad to the little girl; yet it was not her own bed by her mother's. Here, alone in the dark, with no one to comfort her, no one to sit by her

until she slept, the tired, friendless little slave-girl cried herself to sleep.

Before she lay down, however, she thought of her mother taking her to see the ancestral tablet and teaching her there to bow and ask the spirit in the tablet to watch over her while she slept. Now she thought, "Mother is not here to help me pray, and there is no spirit to whom I can pray; the *au bin lang*" ("black-faced man") "of whom the boys used to tell me, or the *maw kui*" ("evil spirits") "will get me."

Thus trembling with fear the little child crept into bed, and cried softly and piteously for her mother until sleep silenced everything but the sobs that came again and again as the great waves after a storm, rolling in from the ocean of the heart and breaking upon the shores of stillness around.

Poor Leng Tso! She had never heard of Jesus, who watches over children when they sleep. The only ones to whom she knew how to pray were the idols in the temples and the spirits of the dead, who, her mother said, lived in the tablets or at the graves. Leng Tso had no knowledge of Jesus: no wonder she was afraid at night. But there are many—very many—Leng Tsos in the world.

CHAPTER III.

LENG TSO'S HOME.

THE village in which Leng Tso's master lived lay at the foot of a mountain. It was also at the end, or head, of a plain, and was called Thau Pau, or "Head of Plain." Though small, Thau Pau was a very old place and quite different from most Chinese villages. Instead of being composed of a cluster of houses, it appeared from the outside like a high circular wall that had become black with age. Thau Pau was really a large round house with high strong walls on the outside. The rooms were built against that wall, facing inward and all around; in the centre was a large open yard or court. To get a better idea of this village, imagine an immense round box, without top or bottom, having another box, somewhat smaller, standing inside. The space between the two would represent the house or houses, and the space inside of the smaller box would be the yard.

In the house there were two stories. The rooms on the ground were used partly as dwellings for the people, but more as the homes of the cattle, goats, dogs, poultry, and pigs of course, while the rooms on

the second floor were for the people. The outer wall had no windows or doors, but a couple of gates that could be securely closed in case of need.

Such walled villages, or circular houses, are now seldom seen in Southern China, and those that remain are rapidly going to ruin. Than Pau, though among the last of these *laus*, as the Chinese call them, was going to decay too; and in one place, toward the mountain, the outer wall had fallen down, and the rooms in that part had long ago been given up when Leng Tso was brought to the place.

Such villages were probably built hundreds of years ago to protect the people from wild beasts, robbers and the warlike attacks of the inhabitants of neighboring villages. Less than a hundred years ago it was a common thing in China for the people of one village to attack and try to rob those of another. Many now living there can remember such village wars. Though becoming very rare, yet fights, with the purpose of robbing and killing, are not entirely unknown even to this day among the Chinese villagers.

Does some one wonder how the Chinese can live together in peace in such a house? They do not. They just quarrel. Chinese know how to quarrel—and they put that knowledge to use quite often—but they seldom fight.

The people who live in such villages are usually related to each other—brothers and cousins more or

less distant; and often the land around the village is owned by the people in common. Land thus owned is generally divided into parts, and each family takes a part to work or several of them unite in working it one year, and the next some other of the villagers join to work it.

Leng Tso's master could not get people to join with him in working the public land, as he was not much liked in the village; so a part of the ground was rented to him by the rest of the people. His field was near the mountain, and had in it a fine spring that gave out a stream of clear, cool water. This spring, in the greatest drought, never became dry, and made the field of Hou very valuable. His crops of rice never failed, and he had become almost a rich man among the people of Thau Pau. Instead of one set of rooms, he had two in the large house. He used one set, on the first floor, for a stable, poultry-house, barn and storehouse, and the other for kitchen and living-rooms, and had all the upper part for bedrooms and—nothing.

Hou—or Hou Lo, as his neighbors called him—though he liked riches, was not exactly a miser—that is, he did not love money very much for its own sake. He did not love anything or anybody very much. Like some other people, he seemed to have been born cross, and became more and more so every year that he lived. Hou just ate and slept and worked and grew richer and more surly

year after year because he did not know what else to do. He had owned another little slave-girl before he bought Leng Tso. Her he had beaten so much and treated so badly that she died: the people in Thau Pau said that Hou Lo had killed her.

Such was the village, and such the master of Leng Tso. There was nothing pretty in the village except a very large banyan tree that stood in the court or centre yard. Its far-reaching branches shaded a large part of the yard, and its great roots, in some places lying on the top of the ground and crossing each other in various directions, made rustic seats and pretty playhouses for the children. This tree had no shoots running down from its limbs to the ground and growing there, as have many banyan trees in other parts of the world. The Chinese usually cut them off for fire-wood as soon as they come near the ground. Several, and even many, shoots, when not thus cut off, reaching down to the ground from the large branches, take root, and seem like smaller trees whose branches have grown into the large one.

If Thau Pau was not a pretty place, neither was Leng Tso's master a good man unless he was asleep; and, as he slept very little, he took but little time to be good. Long before sunrise he would be on his field, and there he would work until evening. He said that it made people lazy to sleep. So, the next morning after Leng Tso had come to her new home, Hou went into the little room where she was,

and long before she had slept enough roused her and told her to get up right away. Poor child! Disturbed in a dream in which she was home again with her mother and Seng and Iau, when she opened her eyes she did not know where she was; the room was dark yet, and she could not see anything. Fortunately, Hou went to the field as soon as he had called the little girl. After trying to think where she was, and in a drowsy voice calling once or twice to her mother, the little one fell asleep again.

Several hours after, Hou came to the house. Finding that she had not risen yet, he went to her bed, and, shaking the child rudely, told her that if she did not get up at once he would beat her with a stick. Leng Tso soon remembered where she was and who the man was who stood scowling at her. Too much afraid to cry, she slowly crept out of her bed, and was soon ready to follow Hou to the field. Poor thing! she was so frightened by his voice and face that she did not know what to do but obey him.

She was too small to work, but her master thought it would be well to let her know what she must do after a while. Because she did not get up when he called the first time, he made her do without anything to eat until noon. Then the child, hungry and thirsty and hot, slowly followed him to the village. How good the tea tasted! and how eagerly she ate the bowl of rice and bit of

pork given her! Wistfully she looked for more, but no more was given until Hou had gone to the field; then his daughter gave the hungry little one another large bowl of rice.

That afternoon, when Hou So—for thus Hou's wife was called—and her daughter were taking a nap, Leng Tso slipped out of doors and ran away. She meant to find her mother, but, not knowing which way to go, she began calling, "Mother! mother!" So Chim, the old woman who had come with her to the village, knew the child's voice and went to bring her back. She brought the little girl into the house of her son.

So Chim's son was a poorer man than Hou, and had only one set of rooms in the large house. In one of the lower ones was kept the buffalo-cow that he and his brother owned together, and in the upper rooms lived his large family. Here the old woman carried the frightened child.

"See!" said Khiau, the oldest boy; "*ma*" (the Chinese word for "grandmother") has brought another girl to our home, but this is larger and much prettier than the little baby she brought. I wish that she could bring such large ones every time, and then they would not cry so."

The old woman told the little boy that this was not a new sister, but a little girl who had no brother or sister, father or mother, any more, and she wanted him to love and treat her as his sister.

"Yes, I *have* a mother, and brothers too," said

Leng Tso, "and I want to go where they are. Will you take me to her?"

So Chim, taking the little girl on her lap, told the grandchildren about Leng Tso, and asked them to be kind to the little stranger; "For," said she, "I was once a poor little girl, and sold away from home to your grandfather So's father, to become his son's wife when I grew up. And oh, it was so hard to be sold among strangers!"

Khiau, without replying to his grandmother, walked up to the child and, putting his arms around her, said, "I will be your older brother." The kindness of all the children won the confidence of Leng Tso, and soon she was playing and laughing happily with them.

When it was nearly night, So Chim took the little girl back to her master. Leng Tso begged not to be left at the "bad man's house," but to be taken to her mother. Soon after, Hou came in from his work tired, hungry and cross. In some way he had learned of Leng Tso's attempt to run away, and, calling her, he asked where she had been.

"I want to find mother," she replied.

"I'll find your mother," replied the cruel man as with his hard hand he struck the child a severe blow. "Do you mean to run away again? If you do, I will whip you half dead. Stop crying, or I will do it now."

The little girl, smothering her cries as best she

could, crept into a corner, where, with her head on a bench, she lay sobbing until she fell asleep.

The next morning, long before sunrise, Hou was in the field at work. He had so much to do that he had forgotten to arouse his little slave-girl, and Leng Tso was allowed to sleep until he came home for his morning meal. After eating he took her with him, to make sure of her not running away. There, on a path between two rice-fields, he placed her, and told her to keep the birds away from the rice. Though the drought was severe at Thau Pau as well as in other places, yet the many springs running from the mountain gave water enough to flood many of the rice-fields, and thus prevented a total failure of crops. In this place Leng Tso remained, though she soon forgot all about the birds, until Hou called her to go home to dinner. After dinner he took her again to the field; and there, bare-headed and with nothing to shelter her from the scorching sun, the child was forced to stay until night. As it grew dark her master called her to follow him to the village.

Leng Tso would eat no supper that night; she wanted water only. When Hou So put her to bed —for the mother's heart pitied the little stranger so much that she would not drive her to bed alone —she noticed that Leng Tso's hands and face were burning hot. Before going to bed herself she went to the little room again, and for a long time watched the child toss about in a restless sleep. Again

and again the lips would open and a low voice say, "Mother, cold water!"

In the morning the child was almost delirious with fever. Her tossing and moaning touched even Hou's heart, or perhaps he was afraid that he might lose his slave-girl. A Chinese doctor was called, who said that the child had a fever, caused by exposure to the sun. Though she begged for cold water, he forbade her having anything to drink except a little warm tea. Then he began preparing medicines for driving the fever away. Among them were dried snails pounded fine, to make her heart beat slower. When he learned that Leng Tso had lately been brought from her mother, he put in the medicine a very small amount of tiger's bones, prepared in the same way, to make the child brave. His medicines would certainly cure in a few days, he said, but she did not get better.

Every day So Chim came in and sat for hours by the little sufferer, and often for whole nights she was there, watching and giving medicines and tenderly soothing the sick child. Every day, too, she visited the village-temple to offer incense to the idol and pray that it would heal Leng Tso. Once she paid a fortune-teller to say whether the little girl would get better or not; and when the answer was given that the child would die, the old woman's heart was filled with sadness. She determined to try one thing more. In a city more than ten miles away there was a large temple, and in it an idol

who had cured very many, the people said. To this temple So Chim went; and, carrying all the offerings she could give, she laid them before the idol as she begged the dumb and lifeless image to save the life of the child. When she drew from the great number of answers prepared beforehand for those who worshiped the idol, she drew one that gave an unfavorable answer; and So Chim believed that Leng Tso must die. Hopeless, she turned homeward. She asked herself why she loved that little stranger-girl so much. In the few days that she had known the child she had learned to love her almost as though she were her own. But when she remembered how she too had been sold by her father, when yet a small girl, to go among strangers, and remembered how she longed for home and mother, and thought of that last parting with her mother, she could not wonder that she pitied the little stranger so much. And when she recalled the often-repeated request of Leng Tso, "Take me to my mother," she felt willing to do anything if she might only save the child's life and feel sure that the mother and little one would meet again. The poor China-woman did not know of that place

> "Where the child has found its mother,
> Where the mother finds her child;
> Where dear families are gathered
> That were scattered on the wild."

Neither So Chim's journey and prayers nor the

doctor's medicine made the sick child any better. For nearly three weeks the fever continued, and every one wondered that she did not die; but at last the fever left her, and Leng Tso began slowly to get well. She was very weak, and it was a long time before she could go out of doors; then Hou, who was thankful that his slave-girl had not died, allowed So Chim to take the little girl for a few days to her son's house. During the sickness, and especially during the recovery, Leng Tso's master had been unusually kind. His heart was not so entirely hardened that he did not feel sorry for the child, nor did he forget that it was his own thoughtless cruelty in keeping Leng Tso exposed to the hot sun a whole day that had caused the fever. He was glad to be able to give the little one some pleasure, and actually offered to carry Leng Tso over to So Chim's home; but the child reached her thin arms up to the old woman and said, "Please, you take me."

Khiau, who was in the yard, shouted when he saw his grandmother come with Leng Tso, but he stopped short when he saw the pale face of the little girl. Without saying anything further, he followed his grandmother up stairs, and when the child was comfortably seated went to her and, putting his arms around her, said,

"My little sister, I am glad that you have come. I wanted to tell you that the first week you were sick I went every day to the temple to pray the

god that you might get well; but when you grew worse and worse, I did not believe that the god knew how to heal you. That god is not good for much, any way. If I were a man, I could make a better one myself."

"Khiau, Khiau, don't talk so!" said his mother.

"But father does not worship the idol," said the boy. "If the god were good for anything, *he* would know it and go to the temple sometimes. Other men do not go, either."

"You are only a child, and must not talk so," said So Chim.

"Perhaps men who are strong and know so much more than children and women need not worship the gods," said Mi, Khiau's oldest sister. "But we need the gods to take care of us: I know that."

"I do not need them, unless it may be when tigers come; I can take care of myself as well as our village-god can. Any boy with legs and eyes and hands can do more for himself than an idol, who must stay where he is placed," said Khiau.

"Children," answered the mother, "you must not speak ill of the gods; you may need them some day. Don't make them angry when you do not need them."

"I mean to try," continued Khiau, "to find out which is the strongest god, and I'll be *his* friend always; but the others I will not worship. I want a first-class god for mine. Poor gods are of

no use. They get all of our worship and food, and give nothing back."

"You must not talk so; you are too young to know about the gods," said So Chim. "If they were of no use, our fathers, who were wiser than we, would have found it out."

And thus the conversation closed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SLAVE-GIRL AT WORK.

WE pass over four years of Leng Tso's life since she was taken from her home. In that time she has not seen, or even heard from, her mother or any of her friends. But she has not forgotten her mother or the home in which she was so happy. She still lives at Thau Pau as Hou's slave-girl. Sometimes she is almost contented and happy, if slaves are ever contented who were once free. Sometimes, too, her master seems to forget that she is his slave-girl, and treats her almost as though she were his daughter; but these sometimes do not come often.

She has grown to be quite a large girl, and her light-brown face, tanned by going out in the sun, often without hat or bonnet, appears very different from the pale, almost white, face of four years ago. She has long since recovered from that severe sickness, and is now as well and strong as any one. She can run and shout and play as heartily as any child in the village. Though only a slave-girl, she is not without friends among the children.

All know that she will not always be a slave, but some day may be sold to become somebody's wife, and it may be the wife of one of their own friends.

Though as fond of play as any child, Leng Tso has little time for it. Hou has not forgotten to work, and is up as early in the morning as he dare go to the field, and usually takes his slave along to help him. We say "as early as he dare," for there are tigers in the mountains near. The Chinese are so superstitious that they are afraid to kill these animals, and lately more than one night-traveler has been carried off by them. Hou cares even more for his life than he does to work, and his body as well as that of the little girl gets many an extra hour of rest because of the tigers. When Leng Tso's bare feet patter along the path behind her master as he goes to his work after daylight, she feels almost thankful that there are tigers in the mountain; for if there were none, she would have to work even more than she does now.

Part of her work is to drive Hou's goats out to the foot of the mountain and watch, as they eat the grass there, that they do not stray away up the mountain and get lost or caught by tigers. Sometimes she must lead out, by a rope fastened to a ring in its nose, the great buffalo-cow, to pasture in some spot where the grass has not been entirely dug up.

These Chinese buffaloes are very different from

the animals in America called by the same name. They are larger than large oxen, and are very strong and heavy. Their color is a dirty dark gray; they have but little hair on their tough skin, and have horns that are very large and rough and appear somewhat like the horns of some old sheep. These buffaloes the Chinese call *water-cows*, because they are fond of lying in water, and even in mud. Often they lie with the whole body except the nose and head covered by water. They would be the most beautiful animals living if all others should die, but as long as there remains one animal besides the Chinese buffalo they cannot be the prettiest. If not handsome, they are gentle and easily managed, and to very small children is often given the charge of one of these huge creatures. The Chinese keep them more for the work they can do than for the milk they give. Chinese do not care much for milk, and do not use butter at all. Ploughing, harrowing, and sometimes turning the very little machinery the Chinese have, are nearly all the kinds of work done by these animals.

It was one of these great buffaloes that the little girl was obliged to lead out to pasture and to water. Sometimes Hou, when he had work for Leng Tso, would drive a wooden or an iron peg into the ground, and by a long rope fasten the buffalo where it might eat the grass and yet not run away while he was at work. To leave it in

the field with no one near might give the bold tigers a chance to get a large and cheap dinner, or human thieves might steal it,

One day, when Hou had some business away, he told the little girl to take the buffalo to pasture and to dig some grass-roots for fuel. So, with a broad-brimmed hat on her head and a heavy hoe in one hand and leading the buffalo with the other, she went off to her work. After fastening the animal in a good grassy place, she began digging up the sod and striking it on the handle of the hoe to rid it of earth, and then laid the roots and grass-tops in a place where they might dry.

Fuel is so scarce in China that everything which will burn is used. Children very often dig up the sod in this way, and, after drying it in the sun, store it away for use in cooking.

To lift the heavy Chinese hoe was hard work for Leng Tso, and she could not help wanting to rest often. By and by she became very tired, and sat down to rest. Her little head soon dropped over to one side, and she was fast asleep. After sleeping a long time she dreamed that a large tiger suddenly sprang upon her and struck his sharp claws deep into her back. With a scream of pain and terror she sprang up, and saw Hou standing over her with a whip ready to strike her again. The sharp stinging from the blow of his whip she had thought was caused by a tiger's claws.

"Sleeping, are you?" said Hou—"sleeping, when

I told you to work! This is the way that you work, is it, when I am not here? It is afternoon already, and you have done nothing yet! I'll show you! I'll teach you to sleep when you are told to work!" and with each sentence he struck the child a blow harder than the one preceding it. In vain were her screams. Hou had caught her asleep when he had told her to work, and he meant to teach her a lesson that she would not soon forget. These lessons came often. Though kind sometimes, her master was often cruel, and at times even brutal.

When Hou thought his slave had been punished enough he said,

"Now go to work, and do not stop until you have filled this bag, which I have brought, with grass-roots. See that you do before night; for if you do not have it full then, you shall stay and fill it by moonlight. So work quickly if you don't want tigers to get you. You cannot have anything to eat until you come home with the bag full of roots and grass." With that he took the buffalo and went back to the village.

The child saw him go away, and at first was ready to run after him to beg not to be left alone until the tigers came, but she knew that he would beat her the harder if he even saw her idle; so she took up the heavy hoe and began to dig the sod loose. Her back, shoulders and arms ached and smarted so from the whipping that she could hardly work at all. Every few minutes she stopped and

cried with pain. Gradually the pain grew less, and she dug all the harder; for oh the terrible thought of staying out there at night when the tigers came! She could not bear even to think of it, and yet could not keep the thought of tigers from her mind. Her fear grew so great that she looked around every minute to see if any tigers were coming.

After digging as hard as she could for a while she felt her hands burn, and soon they smarted. She stopped to look, and there were great blisters on them. What should she do? The bag was not nearly full; it was almost night; her hands were so sore that she could not work. But then the tigers! She must work. But those hands! How could she? For a moment she sat down to think. Suddenly she started up with a scream, "Tigers!" and began to run. She heard light footsteps behind her, and felt sure that it must be tigers.

In a moment the voice of Khiau called out, "Don't run; it is Khiau, and not tigers." Then, for the first time looking around, she saw the boy coming across the field. Her heart beat so hard that she could hear it throb.

"Oh, Khiau," said she, "I am so glad that it is you! I thought that it was a tiger, and was running away from it. I am so afraid that they will come and eat me up."

"It is not a tiger, but a friend," said he. "But what are you doing?"

Leng Tso told him, and told him, too, how her master had whipped her.

"I wish that Hou was dead," said the boy. "He ought to die, and demons get him. He ought never to be born over again, even if he were born a dog. He is not so good as a dog now."

"Do not say so, Khiau," said the girl; "he is good sometimes."

"Yes, when he sleeps; no one is bad then. Why can he not be good some other times too?"

"He is," answered Leng Tso; "it is only sometimes that he is bad. But, Khiau, will you help me fill that bag with roots?"

"Yes, of course I will. Here," said the boy, "give me the hoe. I'll dig and you knock the ground off, and we will have that bag full by sundown."

Before the sun had set the work was done, and Khiau, carrying the bag of roots on his back and the hoe in his hand, followed the little girl to the village. Not until she was inside of the walls did her heart stop its anxious throbbing. How glad Leng Tso felt that evening that she lived in a *lau*, or walled village!

When Leng Tso came in from her work Hou said nothing. He probably felt ashamed of his cruelty to the child, and seemed determined to treat her more kindly—until he became angry again. Very early in the evening he went to bed, and Leng Tso, as did Hou's wife and daughter, went

out into the court to see the people and talk. It was a bright moonlight night, and seemed almost as light as day. A number of the children had gathered in their favorite place under the old banyan tree, and Leng Tso soon joined them. They were gravely talking about what each one meant to be.

"I will be a scholar, and then I can wear a long dress like Jin, the great teacher," said one boy. "I do not want to work, and scholars need not do anything."

"Don't have to do anything!" said another. "Where do they get their rice? They must earn it, just as others do. If they do not work with their hands, their heads and tongues must work all the more."

"That is not work," said the first speaker. "They can wear nice new clothes, they do not have to go out in the sun, and their skin is almost white. They can let their finger-nails grow just as long as they wish, and they are always gentlemen."

"I mean to be an emperor," said a small boy, "and then I can live in a palace and have all that I want to eat and wear, and of the best, too."

"But you cannot eat garlic and onions then," said his older brother. "It would make an emperor's breath smell bad."

"Cannot emperors eat anything they wish?" asked the little fellow.

"No," replied the other; "more than that, they cannot go out of the palace, and they can only see the number one great officers."

"Then I don't mean to be an emperor. I want to eat onions," said the small boy.

"I will be a soldier," said a larger boy. "Grandfather told me yesterday of a boy who became a great soldier. He had a large army, with which he marched to a city, and then the people of the city gave him a great deal of silver if he would not fight them. After getting their money he went to another city and did the same thing there, and got a great amount of money there too. So he did to very many cities, until he had enough money for himself and his soldiers for all their lives. That is the kind of soldier I mean to be."

"Where will you get your army?" was asked.

"Oh, I asked my grandfather where this soldier got his. He said that there are always plenty of men ready to fight or do anything else if they can only get a little money. There will be men enough."

"But the government will not let you raise an army. The officers will send soldiers to capture and behead you. It would be rebellion to do what you mean to do."

"Why, then, does not the government send soldiers to put down other rebellions?" answered the would-be soldier. "Every little while some men

from one or two villages attack the people in another, and rob them too; yet who punishes them?"

No one answered, but a small boy, as he crowded closer to the larger ones, said,

"I mean to grow to be a man soon, and then, with a big gun, I will shoot all of the tigers in the mountains. My mother will not be afraid then. She is afraid to go out at nights now. I am not afraid, but I am a boy, and not a woman."

"Don't say *haw*" ("tiger"), "but say *toa thau niau*" ("large-head cat"), said the little fellow's older sister.

"Why?" asked the child. "They are *haw;* they are bad too. I mean to kill them when I am a man."

"'Sh-h! hush!" whispered his sister. "Do not call them *haw* and say that they are bad," she added, in a louder tone. "The spirit of some dead ones may be around and hear you say so. They may tell the living animals what you said about them. You might then be eaten up by some of them. Say large-head cats or mountain-thieves, and they will not know what you mean."

"Do the spirits of mountain-thieves come around us as people's spirits do?" softly asked Leng Tso.

"Yes," answered one of the older children. "But let us not talk about them now. Some may be around us, and then they would know that we are talking about them."

"Liong, what will you be?" asked one of the girls of a witty boy who was a favorite with all the children.

"I do not know yet what I will be in this life," said he, "but when I die I will ask the goddess not to let my spirit go into another body, but let me be born a bird instead."

"A bird!" exclaimed one and another; "what for?"

The answer came:

"I would just like to fly up into the tops of the trees and see what bad people were doing; and if I saw them doing very badly, I would fly off to some tiger's den and tell him where he could get a good dinner for nothing and have good people thank him, too, for taking it."

"That would be better than being born a boy," said Khiau. "If you could get a mountain-thief to carry off some people that I know! I do not see why some people are allowed to live, any way. Why do not the demons get them?"

"Perhaps they have more now than they know what to do with," answered Liong. "My way would get rid of a good many without the help of evil ones."

"Children, children, you must not talk so!" said an old woman who had come to the company to see what they were doing. "It is dangerous to talk about the evil spirits. Talk about the good ones, for they never hurt people."

"Grandmother, do people get born right over again when they die?" asked a small child.

"Yes, so we have always been taught, and—and I think it is true," was replied.

"Are women and girls born girls, and men and boys born boys, again, or how?"

"Not always. Good women and girls are born girls again; and if very good they are born boys in the next life, but if very bad they may be born dogs or cats, or anything else. Good men are boys again when born the next time, but those who are not very good are only girls, while bad men become animals."

"I know what Hou Lo will be," said Khiau, in a low tone. "He will be a dog who has no master, and everybody will kick and beat and throw stones at him."

"Come!" said the old woman; "it is time for you all to go to bed." And soon from the group of women came shrill calls of "Khiau!" and "Liong!" and "Yi!" and "Niau!" "come home and go to bed!"

Before Leng Tso went to her little room she told Hou's wife some of the things that she had heard, and asked if it were true that the spirits of tigers were around and could hear what was said of them.

"Certainly," said Hou So; "and you must always be careful to speak well of them when you call them tigers, but if you speak of mountain-

thieves or large-head cats, they will think you mean thieves or cats."

"Do people ever pray to them?" asked the child.

"No. They never do good to people, and there is no good to come from praying to such animals."

Leng Tso remembered, however, that the Chinese prayed sometimes to evil spirits to keep from being harmed by them, and so thought that perhaps it might do good to pray to the tiger-spirits. She knew that tigers could not harm her in the village, and there was no need of praying to them before she went to bed; but she resolved to pray to those spirits the next time she went into the field alone.

After the little girl was in bed she thought of what Liong had said, and of what the grandmother of Sau had said about good girls being born boys in the next life. This was new to her. She wondered if it were true, and if so how good she must be to be a man, and if she were good enough now. Thoughts came thick and fast. How she wished now for a grandmother to whom she might go and ask the many questions in her mind! Oh, if she might but see her mother again! *She* would tell all. Then came the thought, Would she have the same mother in the next life? Next followed the happy thought that if born a boy she need not be sold as a slave, but might remain at home with her mother and brothers and father always. When

the little thoughts could keep apart no longer, she fell asleep with the resolution to do just as well as she could, that she might be a boy in the next life.

CHAPTER V.

A MARRIAGE ENGAGEMENT.

ONE very rainy day, when even Hou thought the storm too severe to be in the field, he went to spend a few hours in the home of a neighbor, and left Leng Tso with nothing to do. Lian, his daughter, had of late been far more friendly to the slave-girl than at first, and now seemed glad of a chance to talk to Leng Tso. When her mother was at work in another part of the house, Lian turned to the little girl and said,

"What will you do, Leng Tso, when I go away?"

"You go away? Where?" asked the child.

"Yes, I am going away, never to come back to live in Thau Pau again. I am glad, too, for I am so tired of being kept at home all of the time now, since I am growing to be a woman."

"But where are you going? Why do you go away?" asked Leng Tso.

"I am going to live in Au Lam, a village many miles away. It is much larger than this place, and there I can see something of what is going on around."

"Will you tell me why you are going away? Do your father and mother know it?"

"Know it! Why, *they* told me. They made all the arrangements; I only learned about it a few days ago. I have wanted so much to tell some one, but cannot go out now as I did when a little girl."

"Tell me why you are going away, will you?" said the child.

"Yes, if you will not tell anybody."

"Not even Khiau or Liong, or their sisters either?"

"No, not any one—that is, not yet. They will all know soon, I suppose."

"I will not tell, so please let me know."

"I am to be married."

"You married? To whom?"

"His surname is Ton, and I think that mother said his other name is Po."

"Don't you know him, then?"

"No; how should I? He has never been here, and I have not been away from the village since I was a little girl."

"Has he never seen you, either?"

"No."

"Does he know it?"

"Know what?"

"That you mean to marry him."

"Certainly. He is a man, and his father would ask his consent before making all the arrangements. If he were only a boy, or nothing but a girl, then

perhaps his father would say nothing about it for a while."

"Do you think that you will like him? I want to like my husband when I am married."

"I do not know. I will if he is handsome and brave and large, and lets me do as I wish."

"Lian, why do you marry him? Why did you not marry somebody nearer home? Then you need not go so far away from your mother."

"Father and mother say I must, and mother says that one man is as good as another. This man keeps a shop in the village and has money, or his father has—so the woman said who came to see about getting a wife for him."

"Why did not he get a wife nearer home instead of sending so far away? Is he not good?"

"The woman said that he wanted a number one good wife, and he or his father had heard of me; so she came to see if my father and mother would let me go."

"Why did not he or his father come instead of sending a woman? Then you might have seen whether or not you would like him. I want to see the man I am going to have before I marry him."

"How can you, if some one makes the bargain with my father? Women must take the husbands others choose for them."

"But, Lian, why did a woman come to see about you? Could not the man or his father come?"

"Yes, I suppose so, but men do not usually look

up wives for themselves; they hire women or some other men to do it instead."

"How soon are you going away?"

"I do not know. In a few months, mother says. As soon as the fortune-tellers can tell when a lucky day for the wedding will be, then, the woman said, they would send word. I hope that a very lucky day will be chosen, for I want to live happier than do most of the married women whom I know."

"I am sorry that you are going away so far," said Leng Tso. Though Lian had not always treated her kindly, yet, now that she was soon going away, the little girl really did feel sad.

A few evenings after, when work was all done and some of the women were in the court talking, Leng Tso heard more about Lian's approaching marriage. It was the common talk of the village, as such things are in other countries than China.

"Could not get a wife nearer," said one, "because everybody knew him. He smokes opium, and will soon waste all of the little property he has. Besides, he is a cross, cruel man—as bad as the worst man in this village; and that one"—looking at Leng Tso—"is the worst in the world."

"How do you know that he is so bad?" asked another.

"My boy's father's brother" (women in China speak of their husbands as their children's fathers) "knows him, and told us. Besides, the woman stopped at our house when the bargain was made,

and told us about him. She said that his father had given her ten dollars to get a wife for his son, hoping that if he is married he will stop gambling and smoking opium. But nothing will stop him."

"Does Lian's mother know about him?" asked another woman.

"No. It would make no difference if she did. The woman who came to make the bargain offered Hou one hundred and seven dollars for his daughter. After that he did not care anything about the man, or his daughter either. He wishes to have her married soon."

"One hundred and seven dollars!" echoed two or three women. "The young man's father must have wanted a wife for his son if he would give so much. Almost any one would let a daughter go for half that sum. Wives are only worth from forty to sixty dollars now."

"So they would if the man were a good one; but, I tell you, Ton Lim's son could not have my daughter for a thousand dollars," said the woman. "I would rather see her die than sell her to be more than a slave for life of such a man. The gods will reckon with Hou some day. One hundred and seven dollars will not seem so large then."

Hou said nothing to Leng Tso about the approaching marriage of his daughter; he rarely said anything, except to order her to her work or to find fault with her about it. For a few days after he had bargained away his child he did seem more

pleasant and scolded very little, but that soon wore off, and he became more harsh than ever. Hou So, Lian's mother, told Leng Tso one day that Lian would soon go away to be married, and then she would have no daughter at all, unless the little girl could take her place.

"I will be your daughter," said the child. "May I be? I have always wanted a mother so much since I came here. Will you let me be your little girl? I will do what you tell me."

"Lian's father would not let me make you my daughter. But I will tell you what we will do: you may be my daughter when we are alone together; only do not let him know it."

"I am so glad that I may have a mother, even though it be only for a little while at a time," said the child. And then all the longing for a mother's love, so long pent up in the little heart, burst forth as the child threw her arms around the neck of Hou So; and, pressing her little face to that of the new-found mother, she showed how lonely her heart had been, and how deep and lasting was the yearning for a mother's love.

Not long did this satisfied love of the little girl last. The steps of Hon were heard, and then his harsh voice called to Leng Tso:

"What are you in the house for? Why are you not in the field at work?"

The child did not tell him that she had finished her work, for she knew that he would only tell her

she could have found plenty more to do. To answer him at all was to make him the more harsh, and she silently started to go to the field. But Hou was in an unusually angry mood, and the sight of the child increased his passion. With a stick that he held in his hand he struck her a heavy blow upon the head. With a moan of pain, she fell, almost senseless, to the ground. Hou So, hearing the blow and the cry of the child, rushed from her room to see the little girl lying apparently dead.

"You have killed the child!" said she.

As she was stooping down to raise the little girl up Hou caught her rudely by the arm and said,

"Go back to your room. Let my slave alone. She is not dead. See! she moves. She will be well soon. She deserves to be killed, the lazy slave!"

Hou So was forced to go back, but saw that Leng Tso was not seriously hurt; the blow had merely stunned her.

And thus the child's great joy did not last: she was only a slave-girl.

CHAPTER VI.

A TIGER.—THE FUNERAL.

HOU had gone away on business for a few days. He was very seldom absent for any length of time, but when he did go his wife spent many hours in the homes of her neighbors. To be away when her husband came home was to receive a severe scolding, if not a beating; for he, like all cowards, was only too ready to strike those who did not dare strike back.

Two or three days before the time for his return, when Leng Tso was in the field and Lian busy with some embroidery, Hou So went to spend the afternoon with a neighbor. The weather being very warm, instead of sitting in the house the two women sat out in the court. They were soon joined by another woman, who proposed that they take a seat near the ruined walls, through which there was a breeze and where it would be cooler.

They sat talking there until the sun had gone behind the mountain, when suddenly one of the women, whose face was toward the ruins, screamed, "*Haw! Tsou! Haw! Tsou!*" ("Tiger! Run! Tiger!

Run!") Before the women had time to escape, or even start, a tiger that had stealthily crept over the broken wall made a spring at Hou So, who sat nearest, and, striking its fore-paws on her shoulders, threw her to the ground; then, with a sharp, fierce growl, it seized her with its teeth and started to carry her over the wall. The poor woman shrieked with pain and terror and struggled to escape. But her shrieks and struggles were only for a moment. She either had fainted or the peculiar shake that tigers and other cat-like animals give their victims had made her unable to struggle or cry. As swiftly as it could the tiger carried its burden over the wall and escaped to the mountains.

The screams of the women soon called together all the people in the village, and as quickly as possible every man and boy that dared go started after the tiger. Armed with spears and swords and clubs, and every weapon that in their haste they could find, they hurried over the broken wall. The shouts of the men and boys, the barking of the dogs with them, and the beating of the gongs that some had not forgotten to take along, told those remaining in the village how rapidly the party were climbing the mountain. The path of the tiger was only too plainly shown by blood-drops here and there on the way.

As the noise of the pursuers grew fainter and fainter in the distance the sound of excitement in the village lessened; and instead of screams and

loud voices, the people gathered in groups, and in lower but excited tones talked of the dreadful event. Many and bitter were the words spoken against those who should have repaired the wall, but had neglected to do it. Upon the absent and unloved Hou were heaped many evil wishes, as though he were the chief cause of the tiger's coming. Some of the more superstitious and bitter enemies of Hou even said that the tiger had the spirit of one of his dead ancestors, who out of pure wickedness had come to carry off a good and innocent woman. Others—for there are some always ready to lay the blame of misfortunes on those who suffer from them—said that Hou So ought to have known better than to sit so near to the ruined wall so late in the day; she might have known that it was dangerous to be there. They did not think that this was the first time a tiger had been bold enough to come into the village at all. There were a few of the most superstitious who felt sure that Hou So had been very wicked in some way. She had been guilty of some great wrong against her husband in his absence, and this tiger, whom they supposed to be one of his ancestors, had come to take vengeance on the unfaithful woman.

When Lian heard the shrieks of the women and the dreadful word *haw* shouted, she sprang to the door and barred it to keep everything and everybody out. She little thought of her mother or

Leng Tso, but only how she might save herself from danger.

The screams and shouts soon brought Leng Tso from the field. She entered the village just in time to see the men start over the wall and up the mountain, and she knew then that a tiger had been near the place. Too frightened to speak to any one, she rushed to her home, to find the door locked. In vain she knocked and called to Hou So, and then to Lian, to let her in. In terrible fear lest a tiger should come while she was without, she pleaded most piteously to be admitted. It was not a tiger, she said, nor a stranger, but only Leng Tso, the little slave-girl, who begged to be let in the house.

Lian at length carefully unbarred the door and opened it just enough to admit the child, and then hurriedly closed and barred it again. Neither of them knew the cause of the excitement in the village except as that one dreadful word *haw* told, nor did they dare go out to learn more.

"Where is Hou So?" asked Leng Tso of Lian.

Both thought that she, afraid like themselves, was safely locked in somewhere, and when the danger was over would come back. A long time they waited for her return, and not until night had come did any one rap at the door.

But we will follow the pursuers. After going a great distance, and hardly stopping their noise for a moment, the foremost of the party gave a

number of most terrible shrieks and then were silent; they stood still and waited for the others to come up. Each one as he came to them stopped and was silent. They had found Hou So.

The tiger, unable to go very fast with its heavy burden, had often been forced to lay it down and rest. While resting in this way the party had come in sight, and their yells and shrieks had so frightened the beast that it left its victim and slunk away out of sight.

They had found the poor woman, but she did not speak; she did not notice them; she did not move; she did not breathe. Hou So was dead! With groans of horror the men took up the body and hastily returned to the village, lest darkness should overtake them and others become the victims of tigers.

It was night when they entered Thau Pau. The frightened people, not daring to stay outside, were waiting with almost breathless anxiety behind their barred doors for the return of the men. When the sound of the gongs told that the party were inside of the walls, from many a door came the terrified people with lanterns and torches to learn if Hou So had been found. When the torches lit up the pale face no words were spoken; each could read the sad story. Silently the procession sought the home of the dead woman. In answer to the repeated knock, Lian and Leng Tso slowly unbarred the door. The light of the torches dazzled their

eyes, and for a moment the girls were bewildered; but as they became able to look they saw that it was Hou So whom the men were gently bearing through the door.

With a wild scream, "She is dead! my mother! my loved mother!" Lian would have thrown herself upon the form of the dead woman; but some women gently yet firmly led her away, that she might wait until the first burst of her grief was past before she again looked upon the dead. They thought of the grief of Lian, but none noticed that of the little slave-girl.

When the child knew that Hou So was dead, with a low cry that seemed the last breathing of hope's life she murmured,

"My new mother is dead, dead! No one to love, none to love me now! Only a slave-girl! No heart! it is dead!"

There were no loud cries, not even tears; and those who noticed the child little thought that there was another death there—a death of love in the heart of the slave-girl. There is a grief so deep that no cry can be heard from it, and no tear can rise from its fathomless depths. They in whose souls, unknown to others, there flows a silent river of love bearing all their hopes, when they have felt that current stayed, frozen to its depths by the chill of death,—then they, and only they, can understand the grief that has no tears and utters not in words its loss, but in silence and solitude, amid

gloom and shadow, hides the frozen stream that never flows, never melts, again.

Since Hou So had called Leng Tso "daughter" a new life had come to the heart of the child; and now that thus soon and suddenly she had lost that love for which during the years of slavery her young heart had craved, it seemed as though she had lost her all. There might be other friends to love her, but among them all there was no mother. The present was all Leng Tso knew, and all of which she thought. She knew not of another and a better life, nor did she know of a meeting with those who through death pass on before to a world that hath no death or sorrow. No, she was a heathen, and there was no heaven for her, no Jesus, no meeting those whom she had lost here.

To her the future was dark. All that she knew of the soul after death was the little that she had heard others say about its going into other bodies and living over again. She did not know, because there was no one to tell her.

A long night to the two girls was that which followed. Although kind friends stayed with them, yet these could do little to comfort the young mourners. Some of them were in the room with Lian, while others were preparing the body for burial and arranging for the funeral ceremonies. All thought of the sorrow of the daughter, but few gave a thought to the bereavement of Leng Tso.

Lian knew that, according to Chinese custom, she must make a great lamentation for her mother, and yet she knew that the people regarded death caused by a tiger as a specially terrible calamity—one too awful for lamentation; so she did not know in what way to show her grief. Her own dread of tigers made her fear even to speak of the cause of her mother's death, lest the spirit of one of the dreaded beasts should hear, and some day take vengeance on her. Yet if she were silent, the people around her would say that she did not love her mother. Her sorrow was not so great but that she could think of all these things, and what to do she did not know. Thus, between times of silence and outbursts of crying—all the more violent because of that silence—she saw the night slowly pass away. It would be unjust to Lian to say that she did not love her mother, yet hers was a selfish love. She loved her mother more for what she did than for what she was.

But it was not thus with the slave-girl. Her heart had been given to Hou So. It was the child's nature to love, and she only need know that any one cared for her to give back all the love of her lonely heart. To be a slave changes no one's soul. Unnoticed by the friends in the house, the little girl quietly crept to her dark room. There, throwing herself upon the bed, she waited with sleepless and tearless eyes for morning. Her grief was too sad for words, too deep for tears.

All through the night she uttered the low moaning cry, "Oh, mother, mother!" No one heard her, and all thought that the slave-girl was asleep.

While the women were preparing for the funeral of the dead woman they did not forget what they supposed was the present need of her separated spirit. About the body was placed a number of candles, burning to light the soul in the darkness of the spirit-world. Food and tea were also provided, as it was thought that the soul would be hungry and thirsty, and, being so newly arrived in the world of spirits, it would not know where to go to get its wants supplied.

With the morning light the people began the ceremonies that in the darkness they dared not undertake. Before the door in the court a small bamboo frame covered with bright-colored paper and made to represent a house was placed, and in or beside it was laid a variety of pictures on paper of household articles and almost everything needed by people. Pictures of shoes, stockings, dresses, combs, brushes, chairs, tables, bowls, dishes, furnaces—in fact, of everything useful—were there. When all were prepared the paper house and these paper articles were burned. The people supposed these things would become real in the spirit-world —the house a real house, and the others real shoes, stockings, dresses and chairs, for the use of Hou So's soul.

As soon as a coffin could be made the body,

clothed in a number of dresses, was placed into it, and the lid was put on and sealed with a kind of cement. This cement is used to make the coffins air-tight. Often bodies are kept thus in China for many days, and even years, before burial; but, as a tiger had caused the death of Hou So, the people were afraid to keep her body, and determined to bury it as soon as possible. None were willing to wait for the return of Hou, and some even seemed to take a delight in the thought that he would return to find his wife dead and buried. So a lucky spot was selected, a grave quickly dug, and early in the afternoon the people of the village gathered to follow the body to the grave.

Though Hou So had several relatives in the village, and all the people were her friends, yet so great was the dread of tigers that none were willing to dress in mourning. They were afraid that this would show to any tiger-spirit that might be near that they were friends of the dead woman, and thus the hate of these animals would be drawn toward them. Lian alone wore the usual mourning-dress of China. This was a long, loose-fitting robe of coarse light-gray or dusky-white sackcloth. It was open in front, and so long that it reached down almost to the ground; it had sleeves, and her head was covered by a hood that almost hid the face.

When Leng Tso saw how Lian was dressed, she begged one of the women that she too might wear

mourning. The woman kindly told her that it would not be proper for her to be dressed in mourning, as Hou So was only her mistress, and not a relative.

"But," replied the child, "she said that she would be my mother, and she was my adopted * mother before she died. Please let me show that I loved her."

So Chim led Leng Tso away from the rest and whispered that the tigers might get her too if she wore mourning.

"I do not care," answered the little girl; "I loved my new mother more than I fear tigers."

So Chim's kind heart pitied the child, and she would gladly have made a mourning-dress for Leng Tso, but the people were unwilling to wait longer for the funeral. As they were getting ready to go to the grave the kind old woman took a piece of sackcloth, and, folding it in the shape of a mourning-hood, placed it upon the head of the child.

When all was ready two men put a long pole through two ropes that were around the coffin, and, each taking an end of the pole on his shoulder, they started for the burial-place. Without any

* It is no uncommon thing in China for children to *adopt* parents, as well as for parents to adopt children. Sometimes those who have parents living adopt others instead, and call them "father" and "mother." Such children are usually grown, and have a right to leave their own parents.

further ceremony, and without music or the usual lamentations, many of the people, with Lian and Leng Tso, followed the body to the grave. This was only about two feet deep, and was lined with cement. The coffin was hastily lowered to its close-fitting grave, and then all except Lian stepped back to give her an opportunity to worship the spirit of her mother, now supposed to have come back to the resting-place of the body. With sobs and moans the afflicted daughter slowly approached the grave; and bowing first, and then kneeling, she in silence worshiped the unseen spirit of her mother. Three times she arose and went back nearly to the rest of the company, and then again returned to perform the same ceremony. When she had finished, and before the men had begun to close the grave, Leng Tso sprang forward, and, falling on her knees at the foot of the grave, cried piteously,

"Mother, my mother! my heart is with you, and they will bury it in your grave! I am alone! alone! alone!"

Then, for the first time in her sorrow, tears began to fall, and her sobs choked her words. So Chim, in a kind motherly way, raised the child, and, putting her arms about her, said,

"I will be your mother; love me."

Gently the good old woman led the little girl back to the village and to her own home. Other kind friends took Lian to their home to stay until

her father's return. After the others had left the burial-place a few remained to close the grave and to cover it over with cement.

And thus they buried Hou So.

CHAPTER VII.

INTO DARKNESS.

A DAY or two after the funeral, and before Hou had come back, So Chim, her grandchildren and Leng Tso were sitting under the banyan tree in the court. The broken wall had been partly repaired, and they felt safe from tigers. All had been trying to comfort and amuse the little mourner. It was hard for Leng Tso to forget her adopted mother, and harder still to keep back the tears when she talked of Hou So.

"Tell me," said the child to So Chim, "will I ever see my new mother again?" She called Hou So her "new mother," though she had forgotten much about her real mother, and did not often speak of her at all.

"I do not know," answered the old woman. "Perhaps you may. Many things happen that we cannot tell beforehand."

"I want so much to see her. Why must she be buried? If they had not put her into the ground, she might have been made alive again and been my

mother yet. Will I ever see her again? Do people ever get alive and come out of the grave again?" asked the little girl.

"No; they turn to dust, and that is the last of the body. But it was not Hou So who was buried. It was only her body—the clothes of her soul. Her spirit is alive. That did not die."

"Where is her spirit? What became of it when she died?" inquired Leng Tso.

"That," replied So Chim, "went away into the darkness of the spirit-world. It lives there."

"But, grandmother," said Khiau, "why, then, did Lian worship her spirit at the grave, and why did the men bring home the tablet from the grave and put it into Hou's home? They said that her spirit was in the tablet."

"It was, my boy," said she. "I cannot tell you exactly how it is. None of us know all about the spirits. It is dark to them where they are; and how much darker, then, is it to us, who have only bodily eyes with which to see! Every one of us in this life has more than one spirit. How many we have I do not know. One, as soon as the body dies, goes off into the darkness; another stays near the body, perhaps to take care of it, and when it is buried stays at the grave; and another goes into the tablet. So I think that we have as many as three spirits—one to go to the spirit-world, another to stay at the grave, and the third to enter the tablet."

"What if there be no tablet made and taken to the grave?" asked Khiau.

"I do not know. Perhaps that spirit is born in another body," answered the grandmother.

"Is it true, grandmother," asked the boy, "that spirits are born over and over and over, and do not stop at all, just like a stone rolling down a hill that has no bottom?"

"So we are taught."

"I wonder," said Khiau, "what my name was, and whose boy I was, and where I lived, the last time I was born before this? I have forgotten it all. What kind of a boy shall I be the next time, and where shall I live?—Would it not be strange, Leng Tso, if I should be my uncle's boy then? Would I call him uncle or father?"

"Maybe you will be born Hou's boy," said Niau, a younger brother of Khiau.

"You be still! I will not be Hou's boy. I would rather not be born at all," said Khiau.

"How can you help yourself?" asked Mi, Khiau's oldest sister.

"I will be good here, and when I die will go right to Mother" (the Chinese goddess of children), "and beg her to let me be born a good man's son. Hou is too bad to be born at all, unless he be a pig or a dog."

"What do the spirits do in the spirit-world?" asked Leng Tso.

So Chim answered,

"I do not know. Very likely they do much as people do in this world. They eat and drink and sleep and work, and do almost everything that they did here."

"Do they work?" asked Niau. "If they do, I would rather be the spirit that lives in the tablet; that has easy times."

"Now, grandmother," said Khiau, "how can spirits eat and drink, and do other things? They leave their mouths and hands in the grave. They must have mouths and hands to drink and eat and work with."

"They have spirit-mouths and hands, my boy. Every part of us has its spirit, or more than one spirit; so spirits are like us, only we cannot see or feel them."

"But if they eat food," continued Khiau, "how can they keep it in their stomachs? It would fall right through to the ground. If spirits can go through things, what hinders things going through spirits? How can they hold fast to anything? How can they work? I would like to see a bowl of rice eaten by a spirit. I could see the rice in the spirit, if not the spirit itself. It would be fun to see a hoe working if a spirit had hold of it. We would think it a number one good hoe."

"My boy," said the grandmother, "you must not make fun of the spirits. They may do you a great deal of harm, as they often do much good. I will

tell you more about spirits. Not only do people and animals have souls, but trees and stones and hoes and food and water; in fact, everything has a spirit. The spirits of the dead eat the spirit of the food, they drink the spirit of the water, they use the spirit of the hoe and of other things. The spirit-world is like this one, only everything is spirit, and not body, there. We could not feel or see anything, but spirits can."

"Grandmother," said Khiau, "we have spirits—three, you say—in us; why can we not do as well with three spirits and one body as we could with one spirit alone?"

"We are like a man shut up in a tight box. He can see and feel nothing but the box. So our bodies are like a box; they shut the spirits up and hide them."

"Will our spirits know others in the world of spirits?" asked Leng Tso. "Shall I know my new mother or my old one if I see her there?"

"I do not know," answered So Chim.

"Perhaps they will have gone back to be born into other bodies," suggested Khiau.

"And then I cannot see them. Perhaps I shall never see them again. Oh, I do not want to die! It is worse in the spirit-world than it is here.—Who makes us die?" asked the little girl of the old woman.

"I do not know. Sometimes people do, and sometimes I suppose that the bad spirits do. They

can go anywhere sometimes, and they do many evil things."

"Is there no one who can stop them and keep them away from us?" asked Leng Tso. "I am afraid they may kill me as the tiger did my new mother. And walls will not keep *them* out."

"Yes," answered So Chim, "the good spirits can, and often the gods do. But some of the gods are too busy to care for everybody, and others are asleep or do not care to trouble themselves with us. The good spirits have other things to do too."

"What, then, can we do to keep the evil ones away?"

"The best way is to pray to them and offer them food and other good things. Treat them well, and they will not harm you."

"Grandmother, how do we know about spirits?" asked Khiau.

"Our fathers and mothers taught us, and they learned from their parents, and so on back."

"But who taught the first one?" asked the boy.

"I do not know. Perhaps the gods did, and perhaps the people learned one thing after another, until we know all that those who were before us have found out."

"Are you sure that is all true?" inquired Khiau.

"True!" said the old woman; "certainly it is. Our fathers were wise—wiser than we—and they must have had good reason to believe it."

"I wish it were not true," said the boy. "I don't want to have bad spirits all the time trying to harm me, and I don't want to be born over and over and have my spirits separated and scattered about. When we have been born very many times, if only one of our spirits is born over—and it must be so, for one stays in the tablet for very many years, and another for a very long time at the grave—there will be so many spirits of us that we shall not know where we are at all. We shall be scattered all to nothing."

"Is it better to pray to the good or the bad spirits?" asked Leng Tso.

"Pray to them both, my child," answered So Chim. "Get all the good you can from all, and try to keep friends with them all. Even the spirits of good people grow angry and may injure you. People are the same in the spirit-world that they are here. Some are always good and some always bad, while others are good or bad, just as it happens, and you must do what you can to keep them all well-disposed toward you."

"Do the good and bad spirits all live together?" inquired the little girl.

"Oh no. The bad go down to the place of punishment, and are shut up there the whole year round, except one month; then they are let out to rest. But at the end of that month all must go back and be locked up again. Sometimes some hide away, and they are then left out until the gates

are shut. These stay out for a year, and trouble the people very much."

"Who takes care of these bad spirits? who shuts them up and who lets them out?" asked Khiau. "They cannot be very good keepers, I think."

"The gods keep watch over the bad spirits. Perhaps they leave some out to punish bad people," answered So Chim.

"When Hou goes down there, I hope that they will watch him very closely. To have him out one month would be bad enough; but if he should be left out a whole year, there would be no money left in this world if he could find it, and hardly any good people left alive to want it."

"Khiau, Khiau," said the grandmother, "you must not talk so! If he is bad, you are making yourself like him by talking badly."

"Who takes care of the good spirits?" asked Leng Tso.

"I do not know. Perhaps some of the gods, for they are good."

"The spirits do not need any one to take care of them," said Khiau, "if they are good."

"If there is a bad place for the wicked, is there no good one for the spirits of good people like my new mother?" asked Leng Tso.

"I do not know. Our fathers taught us that there is a bad place for the wicked, and warned us to escape from it by doing right deeds; and they

told us that if we are good heaven will reward us. But further than this we do not know."

"Where is heaven, and what is it?" questioned Leng Tso.

"I do not know," said So Chim, "only this: heaven is above and out of our sight, and it is a good place."

"Then I know that my new mother is there. She was good, and would go to a good place if there were any."

So Chim and Leng Tso stayed under the banyan tree after the children had gone away. When they were alone the little girl looked up into the old woman's face and asked,

"May I call you grandmother, as Khiau does? No one will love me now unless you and Khiau do. You said that you would be my mother; will you be my grandmother, and love me as you do Khiau?"

"Yes," said the old woman as she drew the child close to her; "you shall be my grandchild too. An old woman's heart has room for many."

"You told us that my new mother's spirit is not dead; can I think of her as my mother yet?" asked Leng Tso. "I want a mother so much!"

"Yes," replied So Chim; "her spirit loves you and watches over you more than when she was alive."

"But I cannot see or hear or feel her," said the

child. "I want to talk to my mother, and want her to talk to me."

"You can talk to her."

"How?"

"Her spirit is in the tablet in the house; her spirit is at the grave too. You can talk to her spirit in each place."

"But I want to do something for my mother to let her know that I love her," answered the child.

"So you can, and should. Every day you ought to burn incense before her tablet and worship her spirit; and then, too, you should go to her grave at the weeping-season and mourn for her, and offer food, incense, paper money and other things for her use in the spirit-world."

"Will she get the things that I offer? Will not people steal them?"

"No matter if they do steal them; they cannot steal the spirits of the things, she will get those. She will need food, clothing and other things until she gets acquainted and can support herself in the spirit-world."

"Are paper things as good as real ones to put at her grave?"

"Yes, if you get those that have the spirit of the real in them. The spirits will not know any better."

"But I do not wish to deceive my new mother. I want to give her good things."

"It does not matter about the things themselves if the spirit be real. When the priests have chanted the form over them, the real spirit enters."

"You said I might talk to her; how can I? Can she hear me?"

"Talk to her spirit in the tablet, and it will be just the same as if you were talking right to her; she will hear all you say."

"How must I worship? Will you show me some time?"

"Yes; this evening we will go to her tablet, and then you may offer food and incense and worship the spirit of your new mother. She should have food, for her spirit will grow hungry. I fear that Lian will not give her any. Every morning and evening you must burn incense and place food and tea before the tablet; then tell her to take these things from her daughter and ask her to take care of the daughter who loves her."

"Will she say anything to me?"

"No; her way of saying will be to do what you ask."

"Then she will not talk to me at all, or even let me know that she loves me?"

"No; she will show it only by what she does for you."

"How, then, can I know that she hears me or is in the tablet at all?"

"Because I tell you that she is there."

"But how do you know?"

"Because that is the place where spirits always go."

"I wish I could see or hear my new mother. Do the gods take care of us and love us?"

"Yes, if we worship and make offerings in their temple."

"Will they not love or take care of us unless we pay them for it?"

"You must not say 'pay them,' but 'make offerings to them.'"

"Do they care for those who make no offerings?"

"Perhaps they do, sometimes."

"Would they care for a poor slave-girl who has no mother, and who cannot offer them anything?"

"Yes, I think they will if you worship in their temple and burn incense to them."

"How must I worship the gods?"

"You must do right, and then you must go to the temple every day; there you must kneel before the idols, and, closing your eyes and folding your hands, you must tell the gods that they are great and very powerful and able to do anything asked of them. You must make them believe that you think they are the best and greatest gods in the whole world. And then tell them that you are a poor helpless girl unworthy of their notice, yet you ask them to pity and care for you."

"How can the gods hear? They are made of clay and stone and wood. How can such things help people?"

"It is not the image that helps people; it is the spirit of the god in it that hears and cares for us."

"Did any one ever see the gods alive?"

"I do not know. Gods are spirits; people cannot see them."

"How often must we pray to the gods?"

"As often as we wish. We ought to go to the temple and pray at least once every day."

"Have you been yet to-day?"

"No, not yet."

"Will you take me when you go, and show me how to pray?"

"Yes, and I hope you will go often. The gods will think that you like them; perhaps they will love you then."

"If they will, I will go often. Is it time to go now?"

"Yes; any time will do. We will go right away;" and, taking the hand of the child, the old woman led her to the temple.

"Where are you going?" asked Khiau, who came out of the house and saw them.

"Going to the temple to worship," said Leng Tso. "Grandmother means to show me how. Come along with us, will you, Khiau?"

"No," said the boy; "I am getting along well, and don't need any help of the gods now. Besides, men don't go to the temple to pray. My father does not, any way."

Entering the temple, So Chim took some incense-

sticks from a package, and dropped a cash * or two into a closed box to pay for them. With flint, steel and tinder she lit the sticks, and set them into the incense-ashes before the idol. Then, motioning to Leng Tso to do as she did, the old woman kneeled down, and, folding her hands and closing her eyes, she bowed her head a number of times almost to the floor before the idol. After that, still kneeling, she began to pray to the god. In a low voice she told the idol how great and good he was, and said enough flattering things to make the god suppose he was the greatest being in existence. Then in a few words she told her own wants and asked the god to care for her and help her. Before she rose from her knees Leng Tso whispered,

"Grandmother, please tell him about me."

The old woman began again to praise the god as before, and then she told him what Leng Tso was, and said that some day she might be a great and rich woman, able to build many temples to the honor of the god and give him many very costly presents. At last she closed something like this:

"Now, if you are wise, you will take good care of this girl, for you will gain very much by it in the end."

After they had risen from their knees, Leng Tso asked,

* A cash is a Chinese coin worth about one-tenth of a cent.

"Do you think, grandmother, that the god will do for me what you told him?"

"Yes, I hope so, my child," said she, "for he will want to get those temples and other gifts. If you ever become rich and great, you must give them."

"But, grandmother," said the child, "I am only a poor slave-girl; how can I ever be rich or great?"

"That does not matter much," said the old woman, "if the promise makes the god help you. Who knows but that his help may make you great?"

"Is that the way you talk to gods, grandmother? Are there no gods that will love you even if they know you can't do much for them? I do not want to make believe, and I want a god who is like a great mother, always loving and taking care of me."

"My child," said the old woman, "the gods are not of the same kind that we are. They are greater, and we must do something to honor them for what they do for us."

"Is there no god who is like us? Is there no mother or father god who will take care of us as children?"

"I don't know of any."

"Who made the gods, grandmother?"

"Made the gods! What do you mean, child?"

"Who made the first ones? If he made them

for people to worship, why did he not make them so that we could love them?"

"I do not know, my child. But you must not ask such questions. Come! we will go now to your home and worship the spirit of your new mother."

Lian was away yet, and the door was locked. Leng Tso soon got the key, and the two went into the house. They found the tablet standing on a shelf in a small room.

"There!" said So Chim; "the spirit of your new mother is in that tablet, and when you worship before that you worship her spirit. You must treat the tablet just as you would your mother."

"But how can her spirit get into that little board? It is not much longer than my mother's hand, and is not nearly so wide," said the child.

"Spirits can go anywhere."

"Can they go where there is no room for them? Do they make themselves small?"

"Yes; spirits can put themselves in the smallest place."

"Grandmother, are you sure that the spirit of my new mother is in this tablet? It does not seem so to me."

"No matter; her spirit *is* in it. But it is growing late, and we must not be here after dark. We must hasten. There is no food here, I suppose? Besides, I do not wish to use Hou's food without his consent. You go to my home and ask Khiau's

So Chim teaches Leng Tso to pray. Page 93.

mother to give you some rice and other things to offer to the spirit of Hou So, and come back right away."

In a few minutes Leng Tso returned with the food and followed by Khiau. He stood quietly looking on as the old woman and the little girl prepared the food and the incense to be offered.

Before the tablet, on a little table, So Chim placed a bowl of rice, a dish of meat, and a dish or two with other dainties. By the rice she laid a pair of chopsticks, and then, pouring out from a tiny tea-pot some tea into a small cup, she finished the preparations for the spirit's feast. After that she lit a few sticks of incense and placed them in a bamboo cup before the tablet. When all was ready she motioned to Leng Tso to kneel with her, with the table between them and the tablet. Then she said in a low voice,

"Do just as I do."

Both folded their hands as they held them up toward the tablet, and three times bowed their faces nearly to the floor. When this was done, So Chim, followed by Leng Tso, said,

"O exalted spirit, the former partner of Tiu Hou, receive and eat these worthless portions of food from your adopted daughter and her unworthy friend. The world is lonely since you left it. Our eyes are hunger-stricken to see your excellent face once more, and our hearts are drooping, withering with drought, because no longer we enjoy the dew

of your presence. Come back to us again, and let us at least feel that you are watching over and still caring for us. Keep all evil from us, and give us every good that, in the exalted land in which you dwell, you are so able to bestow. Remember us, and we will not forget you. This is the prayer of your slaves, the worthless wife of the exalted Lin So and the adopted and unworthy daughter of the noble spirit of Tiu Hou's heaven-born partner."

"Must I always say the same words?" asked Leng Tso as the two rose from their knees.

"No," answered So Chim; "use any words you wish. But always speak very respectfully to the spirits of the dead. Come! it is growing dark now, and we must go home. I will put out these incense-sticks, as they are nearly burned up, any way, lest something take fire from them."

"Will you leave the food?" asked Leng Tso.

"Yes; the spirit may be hungry in the night, and then it can get what it wants," answered the old woman.

"So will the rats and mice," said Khiau in a voice too low to be heard. He did not believe all that his grandmother said about spirits. With all his fun and nonsense, Khiau did not a little thinking for himself. His mother, with her large family of little children, had not had much time to teach him about idolatry, and, as men give the religious teaching of the children very much to their wives and mothers, Khiau had not been taught much

about spirit-worship and idolatry. Until lately So Chim had spent most of her time with her other sons, and she began to find that Khiau was even less ready to worship the spirits and the gods than was his father.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RETURN OF HOU.

IT was several days after the burial of Hou So that Hou returned. He heard on his way to the village that a woman had been carried off by tigers, but did not for a moment think that it was his wife. It was growing dark as he entered Thau Pau, and, seeing no one, he went at once to his own door. It was locked. He tried to open it, but in vain. Where could his wife and daughter be? he asked himself. And where was that slave-girl, Leng Tso? It was their duty to be at home; but of course, as soon as he went away, they were off at once. Women, he thought, were always lazy, and they were worthless unless there was some man around to see that they kept at work. But he would see that they paid for this. He would make Leng Tso work all the harder, and he even thought of giving Lian work to do too; and, as for his wife, he would see that she stayed at home in future.

But his thinking and his planning work for them did not admit him or bring the absent ones to the house. He knocked at the door, loud, then louder, and louder still, all the time thinking what

he would do to give more work to his family. He was unwilling to look for them; it was their business to be at home, and not his to search for them. But no one came. Out of humor because he had not met with success in the business for which he had been away, and more out of humor still because he found none of his family waiting to meet him, Hou became angry. Angry people generally are foolish, and so was Hou. With all his strength he pushed against the door, and the door opened. He entered the house; it was too dark to see anything. He groped about until he found the flint, steel and tinder-box, when he struck a light and lit a lamp.

He saw at once that something had happened in his house. He went from room to room until he came to the little one in which the tablet of his wife was placed. For a moment he looked at it and wondered what it meant. He saw that it was a new tablet. But who had placed it there and why was it there? Then he slowly read the characters painted on the wood:

"Lin Tsui Lau, Wife of Tiu Hou Kek.

"*Erected by Tiu Lian, the affectionate daughter, for the spirit of her exalted mother.*"

What could this mean? It was a tablet to the spirit of his wife, but why should that be erected now? He slowly took from its socket the piece of the tablet having the writing on it, and

turned the back to the light. There he saw written the date of the birth and the death and the place of the grave of his own wife. The date of her death was only a few days before, and during his absence. Slowly the truth came to his mind. His wife was dead and buried, and this was the tablet in which her spirit was! Dead! Buried! And not many days ago he had left her alive and well! Could it be that Tsui, the woman who for these sixteen years had been his wife, was gone? Was she dead? He forgot now all the unkind things he had thought of her, and only remembered that she had been a good wife—better than the wives of others.

Hou was not without feeling. Hard and cold-hearted though he was, yet, like almost every human being, he had in him something that could love—something, too, that might have made him loved by others. But when he was yet a boy every one thought him bad and treated him as though he were so, and poor Hou never let them see what there really was in his heart. They told his wife, as soon as she came to the village, that he was a bad man, and so turned her too against him.

But now, when no one saw him as he stood before what he thought was the spirit of his dead wife, the harsh man showed what really was in his heart. Taking the tablet in his hands, he knelt down before it and began to pray to the spirit of Hou So. He prayed, not as to a god, but to the spirit of a

guardian angel whom he loved. When he spoke her name it was not that by which he used to call her, but the name that he had almost never spoken. It was the name that, deep down in his heart, he had given to his wife when first they were married, and before enemies had made her dislike her husband. When that name fell from his lips and the sound touched his ear, a tear rolled down the cheek of Hou, and then another and another; and he whom his neighbors called the man without a heart wept like a child. All those sixteen years of fear, indifference, and almost hate, on the part of his wife toward him were forgotten. He thought of her as his young bride—the one who would love him and believe that he was not a bad man.

Now she—the only one whom he had hoped to love, the one to whom he had looked as the single friend of his life—was dead. He was alone, unloved, untrusted, hated, despised. Could his worst enemies have seen his sorrow, they would have pitied Hou. Were there any reality in this spirit-religion, and could the soul of his wife have heard the piteous cry of the man whom she thought a brute, it would have comforted her.

A terrible crime was that of those whose tongues helped to make Hou what he seemed and filled the life of Hou So with such sadness. A little unkindness at first, followed by a story that has enough fact in it to make it seem true, may destroy the life-happiness of more than one. People blamed

Hou, and he was to be blamed, for he had been a bad man. But he was not alone in his sin. Others had helped to make him what he became, and they were partners in his sins.

When the first burst of his grief was past, Hou, replacing the tablet, sat down to think. Why had his wife been buried so suddenly? Was this another and a greater unkindness than all the others he had received? Had the people buried her in so great haste to prevent his being present? He could think of no other reason. He knew well that the bodies of the dead were kept in the air-tight coffins for many days, even for months, and in some cases for more than a year, before burial. It must have been because the people wished to spite him. Had he no friend in the village to plead for him in his absence?

Suddenly he remembered that he had heard of a tiger killing a woman in the village, and now he knew the whole. It was his own wife, and the people, on account of their dread of tigers, had hastily buried her. For a moment the old feeling of hate to those who hated him was forgotten; then came over him that superstition that is one of the greatest curses in China. He believed that some of his enemies in the village had sent that tiger. They had taken the time of his absence to kill his wife and bury her. And to kill her by a tiger! He gnashed his teeth in anger and hate as he thought of their malice. Then, as he thought

how it would gratify them to see his grief, he resolved not to let one in the village know that he felt the loss of his wife. He determined not to say a word to any one about her—not even to Lian, lest she tell others. And then Hou's heart froze up again.

Whether or not he lingered to see Lian and Leng Tso, or whether he determined that they should not stay with others, need not be told, but he soon went out for them and brought the girls to his home. He was, as usual, silent and gloomy. As soon as they could get away they went to their rooms and to bed. But Hou could not sleep. After a while he heard a noise; and, going from one room to another to see what it was, he saw, through the partly-open door, a light in the little room in which the tablet was. Without making any noise he approached the door, and saw Leng Tso kneeling before the tablet and whispering a prayer to the spirit of Hou So.

The ice in the heart of the hard man began to melt, and he was ready to kneel by the little slave-girl to pray with her, when he heard her in louder tones say, "Keep me from tigers, and keep me from my master. Do not let him send tigers after me."

The ice melted no more. Hou's heart was as hard again as a rock. He went back to his room hating Leng Tso, hating those whom he knew had told her that he had sent the tiger to kill

his wife, hating everybody. He was ready to do any evil.

Morning came, and not a word was said by any of the three about Hou So or her death. In a few words Hou told Lian to stay at home to take care of the house and do the work; then, calling Leng Tso, he started for the field.

The time for the morning meal came, but he said nothing about going to the village. Steadily he worked, without saying a word, after telling her what to do, until nearly noon. Then he told Leng Tso to go home and eat, and not to come back again.

All day he stayed in the field. Toward night Leng Tso went to see So Chim, and told her of Hou's being in the field and not coming home at all to eat.

"He feels sad," said the old woman, "and no one will try to comfort him. He is not so bad as some think. I will go and try to comfort him."

She went to the field and spoke to Hou. She said it was growing late and Lian would feel lonely. Would he not go home soon? It was the first kind word he had heard from any in the village for many years, and he did not know what to say or think, so was silent.

By and by So Chim persuaded him to go home. Her kind words made him think that perhaps there was one in the village who did not hate him. For days he remembered those words, and almost wished that So Chim would come to his home to

talk to him. He would have given anything for a little kindness, a few words of comfort; but he forgot that to get kindness from others he must show some to others. No one would meet him with a friendly word, because no one thought that he would care for it. If the people were to blame for their unkindness to Hou, he was not innocent. Had he given them a reason to suppose that he had a heart, they would not all have said that he lost his heart in a former life. People in other countries than China treat us very much as we treat them. If the world's unkindness makes Hous, it is because there are people who are ready to become Hous.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ECLIPSE.—THE WEDDING.

ONE evening in the autumn, when Leng Tso was spending an hour or two in the home of Khiau (she might go there since Hou had been treated so kindly by So Chim), an unusual noise was heard in the village court. Men were shouting at the top of their voices and screaming as though some terrible calamity were about to befall them. Gongs were sounded, drums were beat, horns blown, guns discharged and crackers fired by thousands. It seemed as though everything that could make a noise at all was brought out and used. At the first sound of the shouting Khiau cried "*Haw! Haw!*" and ran down stairs to shut and bar the door. So Chim soon called to him that it was no tiger, but that the great beast who had so often before tried to swallow the moon was no doubt trying to do so again. She bade the boys get everything that would make a noise, and hurry out into the court to frighten the monster away.

In a few moments all were outside, where they found nearly every one in the village gathered.

Some were lighting off the fire-crackers, others were beating gongs and drums, while nearly every one was screaming his or her throat hoarse, to frighten away the shadow that was slowly creeping across the moon. A few of the smaller children thought it good fun to have so much noise and to see their fathers and mothers making more of it than they themselves could, but the older ones were serious, while not a few women were crying and some men seemed terribly frightened.

It was an eclipse of the moon. The Chinese did not know that it was nothing but the earth passing between the moon and the sun, and that it was only the earth's shadow that was causing the eclipse. They supposed that it was a great monster—some say animal, others evil god—that was trying to swallow the moon. While the people were very unwilling to spare it, and thought that if the beast or god was very hungry he might make his supper of something else, they were not so anxious about the moon as they were about themselves. The fact that this monster was trying to eat up the moon told them that he was near and that they would soon find he was bent on mischief. If allowed to stay, he would do a great deal of harm, and their noise was probably not so much to frighten him from swallowing the moon as to drive him away altogether.

Though they continued their noises, louder, if possible, than ever, for more than an hour, the

monster continued swallowing the moon until she disappeared entirely. The eclipse was total. The din of their noise was now changed to cries and screams of terror. The moon was devoured, and the monster meant to stay.

When all were ready to despair, an old man said they must not stop; the monster might yet be forced to give back the moon and be frightened away. He said that more than once, in the city where he used to live, the monster had swallowed the moon, yet by continued noise the people had compelled him to disgorge it and make his escape.

Again the drums were beat, the gongs sounded, crackers fired, guns discharged, while all united in loud unearthly screams to frighten the evil beast away. In a few minutes the eclipse began to pass off; an edge of the moon was seen. The people, encouraged by this, renewed their noises, that they might so frighten the monster that he would not only give back the whole moon, but go away never again to return.

In due time the shadow passed off; the eclipse was over, and the people were happy. But a few of the older ones shook their heads as they said, "We have not seen the last of this yet; some terrible evil will surely come." After talking a while about their success in driving away the monster, they scattered one by one to their homes. Some of the boys, however, remained to talk over the event of the evening.

"Liong," said Khiau, "I don't believe that was a monster god or beast that they say swallowed the moon. If it was, the monster had a very thin mouth, for we could see the moon through it. I believe the moon put on a big hat or something, and that hid her as she turned around to let others see how she looked. The moon is only the face of a big woman in the sky. We cannot see the rest of her, because her clothes hide her body."

"How do you know?" asked Liong.

"How do people know a great many things? They think they are so, and then they say so. I think the moon is a great woman, and I say she is; and that makes it just as true as for people to say that a monster swallowed the moon."

"Khiau," said Liong, "I believe that the moon is nothing but a hole in the sky through which one of the gods looks."

"What, then, is it when the moon stops her shining?" asked Khiau.

"Oh, that is one of the black-faced gods trying to look through the hole. So, too, when the moon gets smaller, the black-faced god is crowding the other away."

"I don't believe it at all," said another boy who was listening. "Old people know more than you boys do, and I believe what they say. It *was* a monster that tried to swallow the moon, and I heard grandfather say that he would bring us much

trouble this year. I mean to pray the gods every day not to let any evil come to our house."

"I do not believe, when the moon gets dark and bright again in the same night, that it is just to bring trouble to our village," said Khiau. "It is the same moon which they have all through the Middle Kingdom;* and if darkening the moon brings trouble to our place, why wouldn't it to all the places in the Middle Kingdom?"

"How do you know but that it does?" said another boy.

"I know," answered Khiau, "that there often is drought or sickness in one place and not in another. If moon-darkness brings evil, it must bring it at the same time to every place which has the moon."

"You will see," said the other boy, "before the year is out, that some trouble will come to this village. Will you believe it then?"

"I suppose I must."

"Khiau, Khiau!" called somebody, and the boys separated.

Khiau found his grandmother talking seriously to a neighbor.

"I am afraid that this moon-darkness will be followed by some great rebellion," said she; "it has been so before, and may be so again."

* The Chinese call their country the Middle Kingdom, and others the outside kingdoms. They believe that China is the central and most important nation of the earth.

"I do not care about the rebellion," replied the neighbor, "if it does not come to our village. It may make the price of rice go up, and then we who have rice to sell will make money."

"It must be our duty," said So Chim, "to pray daily to the gods and to make many offerings to them, and to the spirits too, to gain their good-will and to keep evil away."

When the neighbor had gone, Leng Tso, who still remained, asked,

"Grandmother, why do not the gods keep the evil monster away from the moon?"

"I do not know, my child," she replied, "unless the gods are angry with us, and mean to punish us for our evil doings."

"Cannot we do something to please them and turn away their anger?" asked the little girl.

"Yes, certainly; but *all* the people must do something. If one or two, or a few only, do, that may keep some evil from them, but it will not stop great evil."

"Why, then, do not all join together to worship and to offer sacrifices?" asked the child.

"People always wish to put such things off as long as they can, and not until the evil is upon them will they do anything."

"Perhaps, grandmother," said Khiau, "they are not sure that evil will come; and if it does not, then all of their offerings will be wasted."

"No, they would not be wasted, for they would

win the favor of the gods, and not only keep off the evil, but bring good."

"How would it do to make offerings to one god every day and keep his favor always, so if other gods wanted to do us harm he would help us? Then we might let the gods fight it out among themselves, and we would be safe too," said Khiau.

"What if your god should not be strong enough to resist all of the others?" asked Mi, Khiau's sister.

"Then I suppose we should suffer. But we must get the strongest god."

"My child," said the grandmother to the unbelieving Khiau, "I am afraid that the gods will bring some great punishment upon you. You must act and talk differently about the gods, or not only will you be punished, but all of us will suffer for your sake. To-morrow you must go early to the temple and make offerings and pray the gods to keep evil away from us all. You are the oldest son, and it is your duty. The gods will know that you are bad if you do not."

"Why cannot you go, grandmother?" asked Khiau; "you know better how to do it. Besides, if I am so bad, the gods will not want to listen to me or receive anything from me. You go and tell them that we all belong to you. They know that you are good. Tell them that I mean to be better, and when I am good I will make them offerings too. But I am growing so fast now that the good in me cannot keep up with the growing."

So Chim looked sadly at Khiau for a moment, but she saw that he was not making fun, he really meant what he said; so she only replied,

"I wish, Khiau, that the good in you grew as fast as your body does. You will have much to make up by and by."

"Grandmother," said he, "why cannot you and Mi do all the worshiping of the gods and spirits for the rest of us? It would save time; besides, you both like to do it, and I do not. It is harder work than to dig in the field. Father does not go to the temple at all to worship, and he ought to know something about worship too. I wish, if all ought to worship the gods, that you would talk to him. You always talk to me, and say nothing to him."

So Chim sighed, but said nothing. She did not know whether her grandson was in earnest or not. The fact that her son did not care for the worship of the gods had already given her a great deal of trouble. Khiau and his father were like most of the men in Southern China, who care very little for the temples or the gods in them.

While most of the men believe in the power of the spirits of the dead, and worship them, yet for the idols and the temples they have very little respect. And year by year that respect is decreasing. A Chinaman will laugh at his idols, and, if they do not grant his request, will beat them, or even throw them in the dirt, to show that he does not

fear them; he will even threaten and try to frighten them into granting his requests.

After the eclipse came the winter, but, as winters would come in China as well as in other countries even if there were no eclipse, it would hardly be fair to say that this brought the winter. Besides, winter in Southern China is not a very great calamity. The most of the people except boys could endure two, and if compelled even three, winters in a single year. There is no skating, because there is no ice. In the home of Leng Tso water hardly ever freezes. There is no riding with sleds, because no snow lies on the ground, and rarely does any fall. "Not a very good place for boys," you say. No. But then the water is warm enough for swimming all the year round, and it is never too cold to spin a top, fly a kite or play ball. It is a good place for boys who do not care to be snowballed or to try which is the harder, the head or the ice. And for girls a Southern Chinese winter seems to be just suited—that is, if they do not like cold, ice and snow.

Not only does no snow fall, it seldom rains; nor is the sky even cloudy during winter. Day by day the sun rises bright and smiling, as though he felt entirely satisfied with himself and with every one else. The air is fresh, cool and so wholesome that doctors usually take a vacation then.

The birds do not hold a farewell concert and then start for the south as fall passes; they hold

singing-school and have concerts all winter. But they do not learn much. Many of the Southern birds seem to be born with a cold and are always hoarse, or else they were not made to sing. A short song of theirs is usually enough for us.

Many of the trees keep their leaves all winter. Perhaps the leaves find the weather so pleasant that they do not care to go away at all. The flowers bloom until the ground becomes so dry that the plants wither, and the grass remains green if it can find moisture enough to keep it alive.

A winter in Southern China is delightful for those who have time to enjoy it, but for those who work in the field winter gives little time to rest. Though the cool, dry weather prevents crops from growing rapidly, yet some are kept in the ground and must be attended to. Besides, the ground needs to be prepared and crops planted for the rainy season, which usually begins in February or March.

In this winter there came a message from Lian's intended husband and father-in-law that a lucky day had been chosen, and the wedding would take place on that day if agreeable to them. Lian was glad. She was tired of home, tired of being kept in-doors, tired of work, tired of being mistress of her father's house. She was tired of being alone all day while Hou and Leng Tso were in the field, and the wedding could not be appointed too soon for her.

It was quite a long time since her mother had

died, and no reasonable objection could be offered to the wedding on that account; yet Hou did find fault. When he talked about anything, it was usually to grumble at it. He was not yet ready to let Lian go. Her first duty was to take care of her father. What would he do for some one to take charge of his house if she left it? If they took her so soon, they ought to give more marriage-money to him. She was too good a girl to go for so small a price, any way. He forgot that he had agreed to give his daughter for twice the price usually paid for wives.

But the grumbling of Hou was useless; the bargain had been made, part of the wedding-money paid, and he could not now draw back. Nor did he care to do so. He grumbled because that was most natural to him. He wanted the money. Hou loved money; he had nothing else to love. He might have loved Lian: she was his daughter; but Hou felt that he could do better by loving money. Lian did not love him; she did not love any of her friends well enough to let them know it. She did not hate her father or treat him unkindly; the same might have been said of the stones and the trees; and Lian showed little more love to her father than they did. She could love, and did, but loved *Lian only*. She was like a vine that has remained for a long time without a support, and finally, turning in on itself, it clasps its tendrils around itself until it becomes knotted in one mass, and then seems un-

willing to try to cling to any support, and no one is able to pull it away from itself.

It was not strange that Lian did not love her father, for when she was a child and would have loved him he turned away from her. He treated her as though she were a stranger. If it was partly Hou's fault that Lian was so unloving, whose fault was it that Hou was so heartless? The influence of those who treated him unkindly when he was yet a boy did not stop with Hou, or yet with his daughter.

An unkind act or word lives long after the one who did or said it has forgotten. The good or evil we do dies—when?

All the arrangements for the wedding were made and Lian counted the days before the time would come. They were long days to her. She thought little about being a wife and having new duties, new cares, new responsibilities; she only thought that she was to attend a wedding and be the principal one there. She was to go away from the old home, see new faces and live in a large town. In age as well as in experience she was only a girl. She needed a mother rather than a husband.

The wedding-day came, and Lian was dressed in her bridal-dress by some of the old women of the village. Her hair was for the first time put up like a married woman's, and she was ready for the last ceremonies before leaving for her new home. She went to the little room where the ancestral

tablets were kept, and there bowed in worship for the last time to the spirits of her relatives, and especially that of her own mother. Then she kneeled before her father, worshiping him much as she did the spirits of the dead; for after her marriage he would be to her as though she were dead. She would belong to another home and another family, and her own relatives would be to her almost as strangers.

This last ceremony ended, she entered the red sedan bridal-chair. This chair is about four feet square and five feet high. It is closed on all sides and on the top, so that no one may see the bride until her husband has taken her from the sedan. Her dress was of a bright red, and shone with spangles. On her head she wore a bright-colored head-dress fringed with glittering pendants, and over all a mantle and veil were thrown to hide the bride from the eyes of all.

When the door of the sedan-chair was closed, men put the long poles by which the chair was carried upon their shoulders, and the wedding-procession started for the home of the bridegroom. First went a man carrying a huge piece of pork; this was meant to attract any evil spirits that might be around to harm the young bride. It was expected that while the evil spirits were feasting upon this pork the bride would reach her new home unharmed. Next went the guide to show the way, and then a couple of musicians, and after them

followed the trunks or boxes containing Lian's furniture and clothes, then the sedan with the bride, and following her were the people sent from the bridegroom's home to escort the bride; last of all were the friends of Lian who wished to show their good-will by accompanying the procession away from the village.

Hou did not attend the wedding. He was too busy, he said. But people said that it was because he had no heart; all he thought about was the money; since he had that, his daughter might be a slave and die, for all he cared. Leng Tso, being only a slave, could not go.

Soon the last sound of the music died away, and Leng Tso sadly followed her master to the house. She felt more lonely than ever now.

Rapidly the wedding-procession hastened on, for the men who carried the chair, and those who carried Lian's things, thought of a feast at the end of their journey. The way was long, and they must take time to rest and refresh themselves. But thoughts of the rest and the good things at the end shortened the stay by the way. As Lian was a bride, it was improper for any one to open the door and let her enjoy the air; so she was kept shut up in the close chair until the home of her husband was reached.

It was late in the afternoon when the procession entered the village of Au Lam and the sedan was set down before Lian's new home.

One of the company had hastened on before to announce the coming of the wedding-party, so all were ready. As soon as the bridal-chair was on the ground the bridegroom opened the door, and for the first time the bride and groom met. He led her at once to the ancestral tablet of his home, and the young couple bowed three times, as if to say, We both belong now to you, and in future we both will worship the spirits within the tablet. Then he took his bride to another room, and the two sat at a table to drink each a cup of wine. But as she still had on the veil, she could only pretend to drink, while her husband, without any pretension, drank his as though it was not the first time he had tasted wine.

After this he led her to the bridal-room, where he removed her mantle and veil and for the first time saw the face of his wife. The wedding-guests were then admitted to the bridal-room to see the bride.

Lian was forced to sit quietly and say not a word in reply to the remarks made about her appearance. More than one woman said—as some do about young married people in other countries than China—that she was not pretty; that she was not nicely dressed; that she did not look as though she would make a good wife; that her husband was to be pitied; that— But we need not repeat. Possibly our young readers may have heard similar remarks made, when the bride was not present, in

a country that is not on the other side of the world.

When Lian had endured as well as she could these unpleasant criticisms, her husband's intimate friends were invited to tell what they thought of the new wife. The husband himself pointed out her good looks and called their attention to all the good qualities that he could possibly think his wife possessed. When the poor girl had thus for a long time been stared at, until her heart was sick and she longed more than she ever thought she could to be home again at Thau Pau, her husband's parents entered the room and were introduced to their new daughter-in-law.

At the completion of this last part of the ceremony the feast was ready, and the guests were invited to partake, but Lian, instead of being the most honored guest, was expected to wait on the others. She had come as a wife to the new home, and now must show that she was worthy by waiting on her husband and his friends. What time could be better for this than on her wedding-day?

Lian learned, before many days of married life were past, that to be a daughter in Thau Pau was far better than being a wife in Au Lam. In Thau Pau she had seen all the evils around her, but Au Lam was far away, and her imagination had painted nothing but what was pleasant there.

This feast completed the ceremony, and Lian was a married woman. Married before she was

sixteen years of age! Married and wretched! But as this is not a history of Lian, we leave her here; especially as in a story the writer is supposed to have done his part when he has told of the wedding.

CHAPTER X.

ATTACKED BY ROBBERS.

SHORTLY after the wedding-procession had left Thau Pau the people in the village were startled by two men rushing into the place with the cry,

"Robbers! robbers! Quick! quick! Get ready to fight and drive them away!"

In a moment the whole village was in an uproar of excitement. The two men explained that they started away on business early in the morning, and, after going a few miles, saw a body of men hurrying toward Thau Pau. These were armed, some with guns, others with swords and spears, and it was quite certain that they were hastening to Thau Pau to fight and rob the people. Instead of going on their journey the two men had hidden from the armed band, and as soon as they could took a round-about course and ran back to warn the village of danger. They said that the plunderers could not now be far away; so what was to be done must be done soon, or the men would be upon them.

Each one in the village armed himself as quickly as possible, some with clubs, others with spears and

pitchforks; a few had bows and arrows, and some had swords; while half a dozen old guns were brought out by their owners. Every man knew that he must fight or lose his property, and perhaps his life. Many were afraid, but there was no help for them. They could not run, as there was more danger outside of the town than within its walls. The gates were shut and strongly fastened, and men were stationed by the part of the wall that had not been fully repaired. The women and children were all sent into the houses, and forbidden to come out at all until the danger was past.

For a while the people waited, until some began to doubt whether the armed men were coming to Thau Pau at all. Some even said that the two had been frightened by seeing laborers going to their work. The two men, however, insisted that they were not deceived, and that it would soon be seen that they were right. While all were waiting, and not a few doubting, a loud yell was heard just outside of the walls, and almost at the same time heavy blows were struck at the gates. No one doubted now that the band of men were robbers.

For some years past there had been trouble between the people of Thau Pau and those of a village some distance away among the hills, and more than once these mountain-village people had attacked Thau Pau, and not only stolen much property, but had killed some people. Sometimes they had been defeated and driven away. Of late the

old quarrel had been renewed, and the men of Toa Chhin (the name of the warlike village) thought that this would be a good time to attack their enemies. They knew that there was to be a wedding-procession from Thau Pau to An Lam, and they thought, as the wedding was that of the daughter of the richest man in the village, most of the people would attend it, and so a good opportunity would be afforded for an assault.

As they came near and saw that the gates were shut, although it was daytime, they were all the more certain that the most of the people were away, and that the gates had been closed to protect the few who remained. They began the attack with great courage and force, feeling sure that they would soon burst open the gates and enter the village. The people inside remained quiet, determining, as soon as the robbers broke down the gate, unitedly to attack them and kill or frighten them away.

The gates were strong and well fastened. Blows with clubs and hammers would not break them, so the men got a heavy stone; to this they fastened with ropes a number of sticks by which to carry it. Then, all taking hold of the sticks, they started some distance from the wall, and, running as swiftly as they could, swung the stone with great force against the gates. This was done several times, using the stone as a battering-ram until the gates were broken in pieces.

As all had been silent inside, the robbers supposed that the few people who remained in the village were too much frightened to do anything, and that it would be an easy matter to rob the place. The defenders had been placed on each side, but not in front, of the gates, for fear that the robbers might, after making a hole, shoot and wound, or even kill, some But as there was quite a distance from the outside of the wall to the inside of the court (the whole depth of the houses), the robbers could not see anybody within.

After the gates were broken down, the robbers rushed through with a loud yell, expecting at once to take possession of the village and plunder it at their leisure. As they entered the court the men inside, armed with clubs, spears, forks and swords, sprang upon them with a ferocious scream and began to fight in terrible earnest. The robbers, surprised at the number of armed men, frightened by their fearful noise and shut in by the narrow passageway, were almost unable to defend themselves. The few in front, attacked and surrounded by the many, were so bruised and wounded that they were unable to fight or run, and were captured. Those behind, seeing how well the village was defended, turned back and ran away as swiftly as possible, leaving their wounded companions prisoners in Thau Pau. While some of the people secured the prisoners, the rest rushed out in pursuit of the escaping robbers. The race was not

long, for, though men can run rapidly when chasing frightened robbers, those pursued will usually run faster, as these did. When the people of Thau Pau saw that they could not overtake the robbers, they fired their guns and shot arrows at them; none were hurt, though the robbers, if possible, ran faster than ever, and escaped. The people of Thau Pau called after them in mockery, asking if they would not come back and take something from the village, and told them they had better take their friends away if they wanted them. They invited them, too, to come again, and said that the next time they would probably keep them all in the village as guests.

When the Thau Pau people returned, the question was what should be done with the prisoners, among whom were two or three of the leading men of Toa Chhiu. It was decided to keep them bound and locked up for a while, until it could be seen what was best to be done.

After the fight there was great rejoicing in Thau Pau. Each man who had helped considered himself a hero, and was ready to tell of the marvelous deeds he had done in the battle. Unfortunately for their boasting, there were none dead, and not enough wounded to satisfy the story of even a single one of the warriors. Each one, however, felt sure that he had given nearly all the wounds received by the robbers, and had helped in the capture of nearly all the prisoners.

While the men were boasting of the victory some of the women, So Chim among them, and with her Leng Tso, went to the temple and offered a feast to the gods as a thanksgiving for delivery from the robbers. Few of the men offered thanks to the gods, thinking that they themselves rather than the gods deserved the thanks.

This fight with the robbers was quite an event in the history of Thau Pau, and formed the chief subject of village-talk for many days. The children would occasionally look in on the prisoners as though they were wild beasts, and then with a shudder go away to their gathering-place under the banyan tree to talk of the awful robbers.

While the men were kept prisoners, the elders, or the leading men of Thau Pau, were bargaining with the elders of Toa Chhiu for the ransom of the captives. It was finally agreed to send them back to Toa Chhiu as soon as a large sum of money was paid, and an agreement signed by the head-men of the village that no one from Toa Chhiu should again attack and plunder Thau Pau. The Toa Chhiu elders were willing to sign the agreement, for they knew that they could break that; but the sum of money, if paid, they knew could not be got back again. There was no help for them, however, for the Thau Pau elders threatened to lay the matter before the magistrates if the money was not soon paid. As this would probably cost much more, and perhaps also cost the lives of some of the rob-

bers, the agreement was signed and the money finally paid. When the prisoners were set free, there arose the question as to what should be done with the ransom money. The leading men were called together to decide. As they were discussing the matter a servant of one of the district magistrates appeared among them, and said that unless a large share of the money was given to his master the elders would be punished for setting robbers free and for taking money from them. They were obliged to agree to this demand, and gave a large portion of the money to this magistrate. A day or two after, a man came from Toa Chhiu, and, after saying that he had nothing to do with the robbers, he told them that unless they gave him some money he would complain of the elders to the magistrates. Other demands for money were brought in, and before long there was hardly any left to decide about; and that little disappeared somehow, no one seeming to know what had become of it.

After it was known that the money was all gone, the people of the village talked not a little of the final results of the robbery. Many said there had been dishonesty, and Hou was accused of having told the magistrate whose servant demanded a share of the money, that he himself might get a portion of it. Some even said that Hou had persuaded the robbers to come on the day of his daughter's wedding, and had planned the whole thing that he might make money out of it. But others, who

were not so bad themselves, and therefore not so able to suspect others, said that the attack of the robbers and the loss of the ransom were the result of the eclipse. So Chim told her grandchildren and Leng Tso one day that she knew there would be a rebellion or an attack by robbers on their village when she saw that the monster had swallowed the moon entirely.

Khiau asked her,

"Grandmother, how many villages have been attacked by robbers and lost the ransom that was paid?"

"I do not know of any other," said she, "except our own."

"How many villages, then," asked he, "had the moon-darkness? Did any others besides Thau Pau?"

"Yes," replied So Chim; "I suppose that all the villages and cities in the Middle Kingdom had the moon-darkness."

"How, then, does it happen, grandmother, that the robbers attacked us only? Is Thau Pau such a bad place that moon-darkness brings all the trouble here?"

"Do not ask such questions," said the old woman; "moon-darkness brings robbers to Thau Pau, and it may bring sickness to some other village, and it may send famines and pestilences and floods to different parts of the Middle Kingdom, and thus afflict them all."

After the excitement of the robbers' attack had died away and Hou had time to think, he felt lonely; but, more than that, he missed a housekeeper. Leng Tso was too young yet to cook and take care of the house, besides he wanted her help in the field; so he cooked, and let her do the other housework while he was boiling the rice or other food. As soon as the meal was finished he would hurry off to the field, taking Leng Tso along, and leave the few dishes to be washed by the little girl while he was cooking the next meal. Often it took him much longer to do his work, and this left Leng Tso with nothing to do. It troubled Hou to have any one idle, and he tried hard to plan work for his slave while he was cooking.

One day, when they were very busy in the field, he told her that she might go home and cook the dinner. Leng Tso had never cooked rice before, and did not know how much to use. She thought, as her master ate two or three small bowlfuls and she more than one, she ought to take at least two bowlfuls to cook. After it had boiled a while she went away for a minute from the little furnace, and when she came back the rice was, as she said, "jumping out of the pot." She pushed the lid down, but yet the rice would jump out. Faster and faster it came, until she thought there had already jumped out three times as much as had been put in; yet the pot was full. She could not understand it, until she remembered a story in which it is said fairies

made a single piece of money belonging to a poor child grow until it became a very large one, worth ten thousand times as much; then she thought that fairies were adding to her rice. As she was trying to gather up what had been spilled Hou came home, and not only scolded her for wasting the rice, but also slapped her. He told her that if she put so much over again he would whip her severely, but did not tell her that the reason of there being so much rice was because it swelled in cooking.

Hou became tired of cooking and housekeeping, and after a while let Leng Tso attend to both. This pleased the little girl greatly, for not only did it take her off the field and out of the hot sun a great deal, but it made her feel that she was mistress of the house and almost a woman. She would work as fast as she could and put everything in as nice order as possible, and then hurry out to the field, lest Hou should find fault and again do the cooking himself.

They had a hard day's work one day, and at night Hou told the little girl that she must get the breakfast ready the next morning and bring it to the field, for he would be too busy to come home to eat. The next morning, very early, he went to his work without waking her, and the child, tired with the hard work of the day before, slept on. The sun arose and slowly crept up the sky, but there came no breakfast to the hungry man in the field. Hou first wondered where Leng Tso stayed,

then grew angry and determined to punish her for being so slow. Again and again he looked for her, but his slave-girl did not come. At length he would wait no longer, but started for the village. No Leng Tso on the way, nor yet to be seen in the village. Hastily he burst open his door; everything was as he left it. No fire had been made in the furnace, and no sign of breakfast. What did this mean? Where was that slave-girl? Had she run away? Had she gone to the neighbors? What had become of her? Suddenly, Hou thought she might be in bed yet. He burst into her little room, and there the child lay, sound asleep. The angry man caught the arm of the sleeper and without a word threw her upon the floor, and then, taking up a stick that lay near, began beating her. Between the strokes he said, through his clenched teeth,

"Asleep! This is my breakfast, is it? Well, this is yours! This is the way you mind me! Lazy, sleepy slave! I will teach you!"

In vain the poor child screamed and begged for mercy. Hou was more than angry, he was mad, and showed himself to be, as mad people often are, brutish as well as foolish. Not until he had beaten the child most shamefully did he stop, and then only because he feared the people might hear the screams of Leng Tso rather than because he wished to show mercy.

Without waiting to cook any breakfast, and without allowing the child any food, he ate what

he could find, and, ordering her to follow, went to the field. There he kept the hungry child until late in the afternoon before he would allow her to go to the village for food. He told her that it would teach her not to sleep so late again. Yet Hou felt ashamed of himself. Angry people usually do when they think of their folly. As he saw how patient his little slave was, and how hard she tried to work, as if to make up for sleeping so late, he felt sorry and wished that he had not beat her. He made up his mind to treat her more kindly in the future. As she was walking home he called to her and told her that she need not come back, but might do up the work at home.

When the child had satisfied her hunger and washed her rice-bowl and chopsticks, she looked around to see what work she could do. She remembered seeing Hou So once in a long while—for Chinese are not very cleanly—wash off the tile floor and clean the different rooms, and she thought that it was time to do it again. While she was hard at work, Khiau, who had seen her come home and knew that Hou would not return until night, came in and asked,

"What are you doing? Did Hou tell you to do that?"

"No," said she, "but I thought it should be done; my new mother used to do it, and I wish to take care of the house as she did."

"I thought Hou would not tell you to do it. It

takes too much time and costs too much to buy brushes and things for him to care to be clean."

"He told me to do the work up in the house," said Leng Tso, "and I want him to know that I do work when I am in the house. Will you help me clean the house? You are taller than I, and can reach where I cannot; besides, you are strong."

At once the good-natured boy began, but, being only a boy, he did not know much about house-cleaning. He soaked the floor and table and shelves with water, but did not understand how to dry them. Leng Tso said,

"I will wash and dry the shelves and other things that are low, if you will clean off the top ones."

Khiau was soon on a table and hard at work removing some things from the highest shelf, that he might clean it. Perhaps he was a little careless in handling them, for he let a large vase fall from his hand before it had reached the table, and, dropping on its side, the vase rolled off on the floor. Striking on the hard tiles, it broke in many pieces.

"Oh, see what I have done," said the frightened boy. "What will Hou say? What shall I do? I wish that I had not touched it."

Leng Tso was no less troubled, and would have cried had she not felt more sorry for Khiau than for the vase. She was afraid that Hou would whip him, and she could not bear to think of the kind boy suffering for doing her a favor.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Khiau: "we will bury these pieces, and he will not know that the vase was broken."

"That will not do; he will miss it, and ask where the vase is. I must tell then, and he will beat me."

"Why can we not put all the pieces on the shelf again? We need not wash that shelf; and if he asks how the vase became broken, you can say that you don't know; you did not do it."

"No," said Leng Tso, "I will not say that I do not know, for the spirit of my new mother, in the other room, would hear."

"Then we will just put all the pieces back on the shelf and put other things before them, so he will not see; and if he does, he will think that the rats did it."

To this the little girl agreed, and the broken vase was hid away behind other things on the shelf. Khiau was glad to hear his name called just then, and glad to get away, for fear that he might break more things. When he had gone, Leng Tso was afraid that Hou would whip her or Khiau for the accident, and thought that she would pray the spirit of Hou So to prevent him.

While she was worshiping and praying before the tablet, Hou came home. Passing through the village, he heard some one say, "There goes the man who deals with robbers." He need only hear a word to remind him how the people felt toward

him, and he was ready to take his revenge on any one who came in his way. He saw nothing of Leng Tso when he entered the house, but he did see a small piece of the broken vase, that the children had not noticed, lying on the floor. He knew what it was, for the vase was an old and costly one, and the only thing of the kind in his house. Picking up the piece, he looked on the shelf, and there, hidden behind the other things, he found the broken vase.

Well would it have been for Leng Tso had she been away then. Hou bit and gnashed his teeth together as he said, "The little slave! I will teach her to break vases and hide them away! She will not know how it was broken! I'll teach her!" He called, and heard the faint answer of the child as he bade her come to him. Slowly she obeyed. Hardly had she come into the room before he caught her arm with one hand, and with the other raised a stick to strike her. She began to cry, but this made the angry man the more enraged as he almost shouted,

"So you have been breaking again, have you? I will pay you for your carelessness. Take that, and that!" he said as he struck her. "Tried to hide it, did you? But you cannot hide this, nor this. I'll teach you!"

The poor child, terribly frightened, and bruised by each heavy blow, could not help screaming. Louder and louder she cried,

"Don't, oh, don't! Don't kill me! I did not break the vase! Please don't kill me!"

Hou had no pity, and might have killed the child had she not broken loose from him and escaped into the room where the tablet of his wife was. There she threw herself on her knees before it and prayed,

"O spirit of my new mother, save me! Do not let him kill me!"

When the cruel man heard this prayer the stick dropped from his hand, and he stood silent as though he had turned to stone.

Just then Khiau, Liong and several other boys entered the door. They had heard the screams of Leng Tso; and Khiau, hastily telling them about the vase, had persuaded them to go with him to save the child. Hou hardly seemed to notice them until Khiau said,

"Leng Tso did not break that vase: I did it. She had nothing to do with it. Whip me, if any one is to be whipped. But I could not help it. It slipped out of my hands while I was helping Leng Tso clean the shelves. She is good."

"Yes," added Liong, "and you are bad; everybody says so."

"Out of my house!" said Hou, his passion again rising as he thought of the hate of the people in the village.

Had the boys not run away at once, they would have suffered for their boldness. Not one of them stopped until he was safe from Hou, and for many

a day they wondered that they had dared face the angry man at all in his own home. Nothing, they thought, was too bad for him to do.

When they had gone, Hou called gently to Leng Tso, and said,

"No, you did not break the vase. But do not let those boys come in here. They are very bad; you are not."

CHAPTER XI.

KHIAU'S VISIT TO THE CITY.

SOME time after the robbers' attack, some of the men of the village, Khiau's father among them, had business in the large city on the coast, and, to Khiau's great delight, his father told him that he might go along. A day or two before starting the happy boy told Leng Tso and his other young friends of this proposed trip, and promised to tell them on his return what he saw.

All missed the kind-hearted boy, and none more than did Leng Tso. Khiau was different from most of the boys; he was kind and pleasant to everybody, and treated the girls almost as well as he did the boys, so that every one liked him. To Leng Tso he was a noble hero. Yet Khiau was not what in America is called a "girl-boy"—one who acts like and plays much with girls. He was a strong, rough-and-tumble fellow, who was ready for the wildest fun, but under everything he did he showed that he had a heart that cared for the feelings of others.

After the party had been away ten days, late

one afternoon they came to the village. As soon as it was known among the children that Khiau was back, many of them hurried to his home to see how he looked and to hear what he had to say. But he was too tired and hungry to say much, though he was the same Khiau that had left them ten days ago, only he was a proud boy now. Had he not been to the great city with a party of men? and had he not seen more than had all the children put together? For once in his life he was "cross." But then he was hungry. People who are hungry swallow their smiles to keep themselves from starving. To their questions he said,

"I saw more than any of you ever saw, but I don't want to tell you now."

"Well," said Liong, "if you don't wish to tell, you need not; but if you are so proud of yourself, perhaps we had better build a little temple and burn incense to you."

"Going to the great city is more than some people can carry," said another boy. "Don't think it is safe to be with such people. Come, let us go."

As all were leaving, Khiau called out,

"Do not go; I am not angry, but I am hungry and tired. Let me rest, and when Leng Tso and the others who are working have done, I will tell you what I saw."

In the evening all the village-children who could get away from home were under the old

tree listening to Khiau's story of his visit to the city.

"We walked until nearly noon before we reached the river," said he, "and then we went on a boat which was just ready to start. It was fun to go down on the water and feel that we need not walk. Riding on a boat going with the current is easy, but when the boat must be pushed up stream, as many we met had to be, then it is as easy to walk, unless you don't push. Our boat had so many things on and was loaded so deep that in some places the water was not deep enough, and we stuck fast. Often the men could not push the boat loose, and had to jump into the water, and, with their shoulders under the side, to lift and push the boat, with us in it, through the shallow place. Sometimes there was so little water that they had to dig a channel through the sand with hoes and boards. I wanted to help them, but my father said I was too small."

"Were you too small, Khiau?" asked his younger brother, who felt proud to think that it was his own brother who had been there.

"Small? No; I am as big as some of those boatmen, almost."

"What had the boat for a load?" asked Liong.

"Many things; I forget what all. I was watching the boatmen and other boats and the new things on shore so much that I did not think to look."

"Did you like to be on the boat?" asked Leng Tso.

"Yes; I want to be a boatman. They go everywhere and see everything."

"Don't be a boatman, Khiau," said Leng Tso, softly.

"If you all ask so many questions, how can I tell what I saw?"

"Children, keep still!" said Liong. "I will ask questions if any are to be asked.—Go on, Khiau."

"At night the boatmen anchored the boat and went to sleep. I could not sleep much; on the boat it was so different from home. Early in the morning we started again, and long before noon came to the great Foo city."

"Is that Ha Bun?" asked Leng Tso.

"No; Ha Bun is a great deal farther. The Foo city is the largest city I ever saw."

"How many large cities have you seen?" asked Liong.

"I saw more than five when I went to Ha Bun. The Foo city has high walls all around it, and is full of people. Some of the boatmen said it had eighty ten thousands of people. We wanted to stop, but we could not do so; the men said they must hurry to get down to the bay in time for the large boats that go out with the tide."

"What is the tide, Khiau?" asked one of the children.

"It is when the water rises and falls," answered Khiau.

"What makes it rise and fall?" was asked.

"I don't know," replied Khiau.

"I have heard Gan say that his uncle who was a sailor told him that the water on the ocean rises and falls twice each day and night," said a boy; "and his uncle said that there is a great turtle out in the ocean who turns over twice every day, and that makes the water rise and fall."

"I do not believe it," said Khiau. "There is no turtle big enough. Gan's uncle could not have seen much of the ocean. But I want to tell you of a large bridge across the river by the Foo city. It is all made of stone. There are stone walls built up from the bottom of the river four times as high above the water as a tall man, and then very large stones are laid across these walls."

"How could the boat go between the walls?" asked Liong.

"They were far apart, and the stones were very long."

"Were they as long as a man?" asked a boy.

"As long as a man! Yes; as long as ten men, and longer too." *

* The author measured some of the stones of this bridge, and found them more than sixty feet long, and some even over eighty, and three feet thick as well as broad. Another bridge made of such stones, in Southern China, has some stones even larger, but, as we did not measure them, we cannot give their size.

"Khiau," said Liong, "does it make everybody tell large stories to go past the Foo city?"

"It is no story at all, but the truth," answered Khiau, indignantly.

"Who ever heard of stones as large as that?" asked Liong.

"*I saw them,*" replied Khiau. "If you do not believe me, then ask my father or some of the other men."

"Khiau does not tell lies," said Leng Tso.—"But they were very big stones, were they not, Khiau? Did they grow there?"

"Grow there!" said Liong; "Khiau put them there himself."

"If you do not believe me, there is no need to tell anything."

"No matter; *you* saw them: we did not. Go on, Khiau," said Liong.

"Well, when we came to the place where the river runs into the large water of the bay, we went into another larger boat. Ours was too small to go on large water. The wind blew hard, and the boat rocked very much. First I liked it; then I wished that it would stop, but it did not. Soon I felt strange. Then my head went round very fast, but my eyes stood still, and I could hardly stand up. I did not want to go to Ha Bun any more, but wished that I was home, I felt so ill. I thought that I should die, and soon did not care if I did, for I was so sick."

"What made it?" asked Mi. "Had you eaten something not good?"

"I thought so at first, and then thought that the men on the boat had given us poison. Father and all from the village were sick, but the boatmen were not. After a while one of the men saw me crying, and he said that I was only boat-sick and would be well as soon we got ashore; and I was. I don't want to be boat-sick again. It is very bad. First you think you will die; then you want to. But you can't die."

"How does it make you feel?" asked Liong.

"I don't know. I felt as though I had swallowed a rabbit and two cats. First the cats chased the rabbit, and then they fought for it, and at last fought each other all to pieces."

"I don't understand," said Liong.

"Go on a boat and get boat-sick; then you will understand."

"How large was the water?" asked Liong—"as large as three rice-fields?"

"Three rice-fields! It was so long that I could hardly see across it. It was just full of water. There was a great deal more water than land. It took us three hours—and we sailed fast, too—to cross the bay."

"What did you see in Ha Bun?" inquired Liong.

"More than I can tell you in a month of nights. Ha Bun is a large city, but not so large as the Foo

city. I will not tell you of that to-night, but of what I saw on one of the large boats. The boat came from one of the outside kingdoms, and the people on it were not like our people. They have white faces, and some have yellow hair and blue eyes, and their noses are much longer than ours. They do not know how to talk—that is, they do not talk as we do. I could not understand a word they said, but a man who lived in Ha Bun, and who understands what they say, went on the boat with us and told us what they said."

"Did you say they have yellow hair?" asked a boy.

"Some have, and some have hair all over their faces, so that they look like little lions who walk on their hind feet and have no tails. But they all wear their hair cut short; none of them have a cue, and none shave their heads. They do not look like people."

"How dirty their heads must get!" said one of the children.

"No cue!" said another. "What had they done that it was cut off?"

"Nothing. They never let their hair grow long and braid it as we do. But the strangest thing was a black-faced man. His face was as black as charcoal, and his hair all curled up around his head: I think he never could have combed it. This black-faced man's lips were thick and his nose flat."

"What made that man so black?" asked Khiau's little brother.

"I asked father, and he asked the man who was with us, and he asked one of the white-faced boatmen. The boatman said that the black-faced man lived in a country where the children, as soon as they are born, are put into an oven, and this one they had forgotten to take out until he was burnt all black and his hair had curled up. The man said that he would never get over it. I do not know that it is so."

"Did you see any of these white-faced people eat?" asked Liong. "Did they eat rice as we do?"

"No; I did not see them eat, but the man who was with us said that they do not eat rice."

"Not eat rice!" echoed two or three; "what do they eat? Are they savages? They do not know what is good if they don't eat rice."

"They eat meat and large cakes made of flour, cut into thin slices; and on these they spread thickened oil made from cows' milk. And they do not eat their food with chopsticks, but put it into their mouths with split pieces of iron."

"Is the iron sharp?" asked one. "Don't they stick their mouths with it."

"I don't know. Sometimes they put their food into their mouths with a knife."

"With a knife!" said Mi. "Do not they have very large mouths, then?"

"Why?" asked Leng Tso.

"They would cut their mouths wider if they had a knife in when eating," was answered.

"Khiau, do those people not know any better what to eat and how to do it?" asked his younger brother.

"I suppose not: they do not know much. If you had seen their clothes, you would wonder at them. Some had their clothes tight around them, and so tight around their necks that they could hardly breathe. Then, above their other clothes, they have around their necks a white piece of cloth as stiff as a board, and around this a black or white cloth, or one of some other color. These must be very warm and bad to wear in hot weather. I did not hear any reason why they wear them, but thought perhaps it is because the men who wear them belong to somebody—just as we have bands around the necks of dogs and goats to tie them fast with, and to let people know that they belong to somebody."

"What strange people they must be! Are they what are called the 'outside barbarians'?" asked Mi.

"That is what some people call them in Ha Bun. Yet they do know a great deal. In some things they know as much as Middle-Kingdom people do."

"What did they drink, Khiau?" asked Liong. "Do they drink tea as we do, or nothing but water?"

"I do not think that they have any tea in their

country, for the large boat came to buy a load of it to take back."

"No tea!" echoed several. "Poor barbarians! What do they drink?"

"They drink a kind of water that stays hot all of the time without any fire. One of the boatmen gave me some. Oh how it did burn! It seemed like fire-water. I did not like it, and told the man I did not want any, but he said it would make a man of me. If that were the only thing that would make a man of me, I would rather stay a boy. I did drink some, and it made me feel funny. I wanted to fight.

"What! you fight?" said Mi.

"Yes; I do not know why. I felt very brave, and yet I could not walk straight. It is strange water. On shore we saw two white-faced men, who had been very thirsty, fighting. I think that it is fighting-water."

"I wonder," said Liong, "if it is not what soldiers and officers and rulers drink? for they want to fight. Have those barbarians nothing else to drink, Khiau? How hard it must be to live with them!"

"I do not know whether they drink anything else or not; but the man told us that they drink a great deal of this fighting-water. Perhaps they have no cold water in their country, or it may be that they do not know any better than to drink that fire-stuff."

"When I am a man," said Khiau's little brother, "I mean to go to their country and tell them not to drink it. I will show them how to drink tea."

"Do they smoke tobacco, Khiau?" asked a large quiet boy.

"Yes. Quite a number of the men smoked from pipes, just as our people do, only their pipes are very much larger."

"Then they are not so far behind Middle-Kingdom people," said the large boy. "If they know how to smoke, they know something."

"I am glad that I do not live among them, if they must wear those things about their necks and eat with a knife and drink fire-water," said a little boy.—"Don't you feel sorry for them, Leng Tso?"

With this the children separated.

CHAPTER XII.

SOMEBODY MARRIES HOU.

THOUGH Hou would not have owned it, he felt very lonely after Lian was married. He wanted Leng Tso in the field to help him, and he wanted a housekeeper at home. He found that, somehow, people visited his house when he and Leng Tso were in the field, and now and then took away "something to remember him by"—in other words, things were stolen. After he had beaten his slave so unmercifully and without cause, he was ashamed to strike her again, and, as she always seemed good, he hardly dared scold Leng Tso; so he became lonely because he had no one to scold. Like some men who do not live in China, Hou did a great deal of grumbling. But grumbling is hard work unless there be some one to grumble at. Besides, Hou had very little company in the village. Few cared to talk to him at all, and since the robbers' attack people had kept away from him as though he himself were a robber.

One day a woman whose business it was to bring about marriages—for there are such peo-

ple in China—came to see him, and told Hou that he ought to marry again. She said she knew of a woman who would just suit him. Hou thought that if he acted as though he did not care for a wife, he might get one more easily and for less money. Some men do the same in this country. By and by he said that if he could get a young and pretty wife very cheap, he might marry again, but he did not care about one now. The woman told him that there was one who was pretty, though not very young, and to get her he need not give much money.

"Not young?" asked Hou. "Is she a widow, then?"

"No," said the woman. "I will tell you her history. When she was very young she was engaged to be married to a young man, but he died before the wedding-day came. She then went to live with the parents of her intended husband, determining, out of respect to him, never to marry. But they lost all their property and have lately died, so she is left without even a home, and now she must marry to get a place to live. She is good and pretty."

"How much money must be paid?" asked Hou.

"Sixty dollars; and that is cheap, too, for one so good and so true to her intended husband. Of course she will be the same to another. You cannot get a better wife."

"Sixty dollars! Why, a young wife is only worth fifty."

"What did you get for Lian?"

"Oh, Lian was a number one good girl. There are few like her."

"So is this a number one good woman."

"I will not give half that money for her. If I get a wife, it must be a cheap one, and good too. A widow will do. Widows are cheap. Do you know of any?"

"Yes; I know of a good widow. She is not very young, but she is number one good to take care of a house, and she has a son almost grown to be a man."

"Boys are bad and troublesome. They get sick, and it costs too much for medicine to make them well; and if they die, it costs a great deal to bury them. I would rather have a widow with daughters, for when they grow up men will give money for them. For how much can this widow be got? How old is she?"

"She is thirty-six years old, and thirty dollars will pay for her. That is very cheap."

"Thirty-six years old! and for thirty dollars! Too much! I don't want her. She will soon be too old to work. Ten dollars is a large price. I will give ten."

"No, no!" said the woman; "that would hardly buy you an old woman. This one is strong, and good too. Think! only thirty dollars for a wife!"

But Hou would not pay so much. He thought that it would be too much risk to have two to feed, and to doctor if sick. So he told the woman, but in his own mind he thought it would be a great help to him to have that boy. No bargain was made, and the woman left, promising to see Hou again. A few days after, she came again and offered to make a bargain for another widow, without children. But Hou had thought a great deal of that boy, and finally agreed to pay twenty dollars for the widow who had a son. As money is not usually given for boys in China, Hou said nothing about this one, only he thought of the work that his stepson would do.

The bargain made, next was the setting of the day for the marriage. Hou wanted it as soon as possible, but no wedding-feast. He and the widow were too old, he said; but he thought of the cost for a feast. After the widow had been consulted the marriage-day was set, and not far off.

The day before the wedding Hou told Leng Tso to clean the house and prepare for some company. Then he told her that he would be married the next day, and she must try to get So Chim to help her make some cakes for the wedding. So Chim came in and made all the preparation possible; but, as Hou said that there would be only a few guests, not a great deal of any kind of food was prepared.

While the two were working Leng Tso asked,

"Do you think that the new Hou So * will be a mother to me instead of my other new mother?"

"I do not know," answered So Chim; "I am afraid not."

"Why? Is she not good? Do you know her?"

"Yes, I did know her years ago; but I do not wish to tell you much about her now. Wait, and you will learn yourself. When she comes you must be good to her; love her, and it may be that she will love you."

"Are there any women who will not love poor little girls who want to be good and want to be loved? I thought that men only are so. But I will try to be good and to love her, and I hope that she will love me, or at least be kind to me, when she knows how much I want a mother."

Before going home So Chim went with Leng Tso into the room where the tablet of Hou So stood.

"We must put this away," said she. "It will not do for the new woman to see it."

"But, grandmother, how can I worship my new mother's spirit if that is put away?"

"You must come here when the new woman does not see you. We will not put it away, but only set it back behind the other things, and you

* *So*, added to a man's name, means "the wife of;" as, Hou So, the wife of Hou. *Chim* has the same meaning, with the difference that "So" is a younger woman than "Chim." Chim is also applied to an old woman or one beyond fifty years of age.

may bring it forward when you worship; only be sure you set it back again. The new woman may not wish to see it."

The wedding-day came. Hou said that the procession would not come until night, so he spent the most of the day in the field, but left Leng Tso at home with orders to watch the way by which the new wife would come, and, if she saw the party coming before he came from the field, to run and call him. He was home, however, in time. Near night the wedding-party came into the village. Instead of three or four guests, there were more than twenty; and as it was so near night none could go back, and Hou was not only obliged to provide a feast for them all, but lodgings too, and a breakfast the next day. When he saw how many there were he was angry, yet dared not show his feeling, but he determined that his wife and her son should suffer for it after the wedding.

So Chim, who was the only one whom Hou had invited, felt more troubled even than Hou when she thought how small the preparation was for so many. While the people were getting ready for the feast she called Leng Tso, and they two hurried to the good old woman's home, and with the help of Khiau brought a large quantity of provisions and quietly set them on the table. But the new wife, who, as soon as she dared, had taken a look through part of the house, saw that something was

wrong, and, overhearing Khiau say, "I think that there will be enough now for all to eat," guessed what the trouble was. She had already heard that Hou was not very liberal, and she had brought so many people along to shame him before his friends. But, as he had no friends, he was not ashamed, though very angry.

When Hou came to the table and saw what So Chim had done, he gave the kind old woman a look of thanks that she understood. It said, "You are the best, the only, friend I have. You have done me a kindness that I will not forget." And he did not forget it. Not only did he afterward give back more than So Chim had given him, but he made the old lady a present of real value. People wondered. They said it was the only present that Hou had ever given anybody.

Before the feast Hou's wife asked,

"Where are your friends?"

"I have none in the village," said he, "and I did not think it worth while to invite my relatives to come from a distance."

"Am I not good enough for them to see?" she asked.

Hou made no answer, but looked surprised. He had never had a woman speak to him so before, and thought best to keep silent. He saw in her eye something that he did not like, and her tightly-closed lips told him that the new Hou So was a different woman from the other. She too

was silent, but her look told that she would have an understanding some day. The woman who made the marriage-bargain had told her about the man she was to marry, and she determined to let Hou know that this world was not made for men only.

The wedding-feast passed quietly and pleasantly, and Leng Tso wished that weddings might come often. On the next day all the guests but three left, and then the little girl learned that weddings do not always bring joy.

At the wedding Hou wondered which one in the company was his wife's son. He thought it strange that no one introduced the boy, but concluded that he would wait until the next day to ask.

There was one thing that troubled Hou more than this. He could not help thinking that his wife was not just the kind of woman he expected to get. She was not pretty, but he did not care for that; he knew that women in China lose their beauty, when they have any, long before they are thirty-six years old. He did not marry for good looks, but to get a woman to do his housework and take care of his home. He was afraid that this woman would not do all he wished. That one question, "Am I not good enough for them to see?" with the look that she gave, made Hou afraid that instead of marrying a wife he had been married to a wife—that is, that she would be mistress rather than he master. Hou had heard of, but had never

seen, such women in China. They are not quite so plenty there as in some other countries. He did not like that question; and the look—he was sure that meant something unpleasant. He wished that he had known about her before the bargain was made. Then he said to himself,

"If she is not all I want her to be, one thing must be remembered—she did not cost very much. It takes a great deal more than twenty dollars to buy a number one good wife. Then this one brings a son who can work: it is not so bad a bargain. If she will not do all I wish, I will make him work the harder for it."

The next morning, before the guests had left them, Hou asked his wife which of the people was his new son. She looked at him for a moment, and then said,

"Wait until all of our guests have gone; then I will tell you."

Early in the day all but two women and one man went away. This man was the husband of one of the women, and of course was too old to be Hou's stepson. Hou wondered where the boy could be, and thought that he ought to be there to begin work with him at once. Again he asked his wife about her son.

"Our friends have not all gone," said she; and the look that she gave made Hou think that it would be as well to say nothing more until those people were gone. Since they acted as if they

meant to stay all day, Hou thought that he might as well go to the field without saying anything to anybody. He started off, but his wife saw him and called out,

"Where are you going?"

He told her that he had some work that must be done, and he thought to do it while she entertained the company.

"You are not going to work the morning after you are married, are you?" asked she, "and that, too, when we have guests in our house?"

Hou thought that she had no right to say whether or not he ought to work; it was not her business to tell him. Besides, those guests were hers, not his; he did not want anything from them. Why should they stay? He did not like her calling the house "our;" it was *his* house, not hers. More than all, he did not like the way in which she looked at him and spoke to him. She looked right into his face, and talked as though she were mistress and not the woman whom he had married. He had, however, enough self-respect to say nothing unkind to his wife in the presence of her friends, and that, too, the day after he was married; but he made up his mind to settle it all soon. He said that the work could wait, for the sake of friends; so he came back, and even tried to be sociable. After a little while his wife asked him to get a pail of water. Hou was astonished; his first wife had never asked him to do that. Leng Tso had gone

on an errand, so he could not say, "Let the slave-girl get it." His wife was busy, whilst he was doing nothing; so Hou got the water, thinking, meanwhile, that his time would soon come. This was not the only thing that the new Hou So made her husband do that day.

After dinner, when she did not notice him, he walked out, telling the guests that some of the village-people wished to see him, and went to work in the field.

Every little while Hou stopped to think how he would teach his wife to obey and not command him. All he need do would be to tell her what to do, and he felt sure that she would listen. Her first husband had probably been a poor weak-minded fellow, and she supposed that all men were the same. He would let her know that they were not.

Before he had been two hours in the field Leng Tso came and said that Hou So wished to see him at home immediately. The child did not know why.

"Go back and tell her I will not come," said he at first; and then, as he thought it would not do to let the guests hear such a message, he concluded to go and see what was wanted. Those people would be off soon, and he could settle matters then. He would appear pleasant until they were away. When he reached the house his wife asked if the village-people did not know better than to call a man away from his newly-married wife and their friends, and to keep him away for so long a time. She told him

that their friend, the man, wished to go home, but did not care to go without bidding farewell to so kind a host, but now it was too near night for him to leave the village.

Hou felt sorry that he had gone to the field, if by doing so he had kept the man a day longer; yet he was relieved that his wife blamed the village-people for his absence. He remembered how they had made his first wife hate him, and thought that he might now turn this one against them before she could meet the people. He told her he did not believe that they liked his marrying her; that they did not like strangers, at any rate. He was glad to see that she seemed to believe him.

That night, when the guests were asleep, Hou asked his wife again about her son.

"I said wait until our guests have left; they have not gone yet. You would not have me tell a lie, would you?" replied she.

"When are they going?" asked Hou. "They stay very long."

"They will go soon; but as I am a stranger here, and you say that the people do not like strangers, our friends will stay until I am used to the place. Since the man could not go to-day, he will wait and go with them. The women have promised to sew and help me make up clothes for you and Leng Tso; it is such a long time since you have had any one to attend to your clothing that you both need many new things."

Hou hardly knew what to say; he would not find fault with his wife now. He saw that she cared for his things, for she had worked hard all day, and he had no heart to say anything unkind. Thus days passed. It was nearly a week before the company left, but the time had been long enough to teach Hou that, while his new wife was a good worker, yet she meant to have things her own way.

As soon as the guests were gone, Hou, who had wondered every day when his stepson would come, asked his wife where her boy was and why he did not come with her.

"I have no son," said she.

"What! no son? The woman who arranged the marriage said you had."

"I had a son once, but after the death of his father an uncle adopted my boy, and he is no longer mine."

"Then the woman lied and cheated me. When I bargained for you, I expected to have your son to help me work."

"Boys are not sold with their mothers, you know. It is bad enough that women must be sold, and to any man who happens to have the money to buy them."

"But I have been cheated. You have cheated me."

"In what way have I cheated you?"

"By not bringing your son with you."

"I did not say that I would. I made no bargain with you at all. The woman who did knew that my son had been adopted."

"Why did not she tell me?"

"Did you ask her?"

"Why should I? She said that you had a son. She deceived me—cheated me—and I mean to have what I paid for."

"You did not pay for my son; you paid for me. How much did you pay?"

"Twenty dollars."

"Tiu Hou, I am only a woman, but I am strong, and I have come to use my strength for you. I left friends who loved me, and, though they are poor, they would willingly have kept me as long as I lived. I left them—left every friend I have in this world—to come among strangers, to come and work—yes, if need be, give my life—for you. What do you give in return? Twenty dollars! For that you buy a wife—flesh, blood, heart, life, soul—to be yours, and yours alone. You may make her work, you may scold her, beat her, starve her, kill her, and none hinder. Who has been cheated, you or the woman you bought?"

Hou was astonished. He had never before heard a woman speak so, and the idea that a wife had any rights had never entered his head. For a time both were silent. At length, gathering his thoughts—yet, after what he had heard, hardly daring to say what had been in his mind for the

past few days—he began to tell her what he wished her to do. Gaining courage as he spoke he said that he did not wish her to order him to do anything; he was master, and he the one to be obeyed. When he stopped to see how she took his words she replied slowly but firmly:

"Tiu Hou, I am your wife, and not your slave. I will work with you and for you, but will not be driven by you. We may as well understand each other now. I knew about you before I became your wife; I knew, too, how you had treated your first wife; and I know that you expect to treat me in the same way. But do not try it. Do not begin, or you will regret it! I know what I can do."

Hou was frightened. He saw that his wife was in earnest, and that she was not afraid of him. Her look rather than her words told him that she would dare to do anything if he should try to make her obey him. Hou So was a brave woman rather than a bold one; she would not get into trouble if she could help it, but she would not yield if trouble came. Her husband was a coward, and she saw that he feared her. A brave woman can conquer a coward, though a giant.

Had his wife suddenly turned into a tiger, Hou would not have been much more frightened than he was now. He made no answer, but soon turned away like a whipped dog, and from this time seemed, in the presence of his wife, like another man. Sometimes his old self appeared for a while,

but a few words, or even a look, from his wife made him what the people in the village called "Hou of the second wife." With others, when she was not near, he remained the same Hou that we have seen.

Leng Tso, who, in another room, had heard this conversation, was frightened too. She had hoped to find a mother in the new wife, but trembled in the presence of a woman who was not afraid of Hou, and after this she too was afraid of Hou So. The many superstitious stories she had heard of tigers and other animals, and even evil gods, coming in human bodies to punish bad people, made her think that her new mistress was one of these, and she resolved to pray the gods and the spirit of the dead Hou So to save her from the power of this awful woman.

To add to the fear of the child, shortly after this, as Leng Tso was placing the tablet of the dead woman in front, that she might worship the spirit, the new Hou So saw her, and not only scolded the child, but slapped her, for touching the tablets. The woman thought that she was handling them in play; the little girl thought that her mistress would not allow her to worship the spirits, for fear that they might prevent her harming people. Leng Tso was certain now that Hou So was a tiger, or some other evil one, in a woman's body; and, while she hated her for striking without any reason, she dreaded the wife of Hou more than ever.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEATH OF SO CHIM.

AFTER Hou's wedding So Chim was very feeble. She complained of being tired and wanting rest. The preparation and the excitement of the wedding were more than her strength would bear. She was growing old, and could not endure very much care or work.

For several days she tried to work a little, but each day lay down to rest, and longer every day than the one before. She was gradually losing her strength; but, as she said nothing of being sick, except that she was tired, none were alarmed. One morning she did not leave her bed; and when Khiau's mother came in to see her, So Chim said that she was too tired to get up, and would rest all day. At night, when her son came home, he saw that she was very feeble, and called in a doctor. But it was of no avail. The next day she was more feeble still. At night Khiau met Leng Tso and said,

"Do you know that grandmother is sick? The doctor gave her medicine yesterday and came again to-day, but she is worse to-night."

"May I go in to see grandmother?" asked Leng Tso. "She is my grandmother too, you know."

"Yes," said Khiau, "but you must be very quiet. Mother and father say we must make no noise at all in the house."

Quickly the two children went to the house; softly they climbed the stairs and entered the room where the sick woman lay. She seemed asleep, and did not hear them until Khiau said softly,

"Grandmother, are you asleep?" And as the old woman turned to see who spoke he added, "I have brought our Leng Tso to see you. She did not know that you were sick until I told her to-night."

The little girl timidly took the old woman's hand as she said,

"Grandmother, I am sorry that you are sick. Will you try to get well soon? We all want you to. You must not stay sick."

"My child," said the old woman, "grandmother will never be well again. She is going down into the dark shadows of the spirit-land."

"She thinks that she will die," whispered Khiau to Leng Tso, "but we cannot do without a grandmother." Then, speaking in a louder voice, he asked, "Grandmother, if we pray to the gods and offer incense and food and wine to them, would not they make you well again?"

"No, my boy; I am too old, and my life is not

worth it. I feel that I must go, and nothing can be done to keep death away. I wish that we need not die. It is hard to leave all that we love. In the spirit-world where I am going I will be as a new-born infant, and with no father or mother to care for me. It is very strange and all dark there."

"Grandmother, don't talk about dying," said Khiau. "You are good—you have always been good; and the gods will not take you away now, while you are so much needed and you want so much to stay."

"All must die, my child; if not before, they must when they are old. I am old now, and my time has come."

"If you go, we shall all be like plants from which the water is taken; we shall wither. Father and mother may be like the sun and moon to us, but the sun and moon cannot make plants live and grow without water."

"Khiau," answered the old woman, "perhaps if I go you will think more of the gods and will worship them more. Grandmother's heart is often heavy when she sees how you neglect and mock at them."

"What is the good of worshiping gods? If they will make you well, then I will offer them incense and food every day; but if they take you away, I will not. If people who serve them faithfully received more good than those who do not,

then I would believe that serving the gods is profitable."

"You should serve them because they wish you to do it."

"What! if I get nothing in return? That will be all on one side."

"My child, the gods do give favors to those who obey them."

"Grandmother, you serve the gods faithfully, father does not; do you receive more favors than he does?"

"Perhaps he receives good for his mother's sake."

"Neither of you has gained half the riches that Hou has, and that many others who do not go to the temple at all have."

"What will you do, Khiau, when you must die, if you have not served the gods when you lived?"

"Grandmother, how much do the gods help you now?" asked the boy.

"You must not ask any more questions," said So Chim; "I am tired."

But the question of Khiau troubled her. If the gods did not help her now, when would they? She seemed asleep, but was thinking, and her thoughts were all sad. The children, not wishing to disturb her, quietly left the room, agreeing to meet again the next evening and pay another visit to the old lady.

The next day she was very weak, but toward night seemed stronger, and sent for her son and his wife and all the children to come and see her. Leng Tso was there too, at the old woman's request.

"My children," said she, "I am a little stronger now, but it is the brightening of the lamp whose oil is gone, and now the wick is burning. In a few hours the wick will be ashes, the light gone out, and darkness be around the soul of the old woman. I have two or three favors to ask of you all—the last that I will ever seek from you; let them be granted to a dying old woman."

Then, turning to her son and his wife, she said,

"Will you pray for and care for the wants of your mother's soul in the spirit-world? It will have no others to care for it. It may be helpless many years after you both are gone; will you, then, as soon as you can, arrange that the wife of Khiau be our Leng Tso? They will not forget the spirit of their grandmother."

To both of these requests they answered that while life lasted they would do everything possible to obey the wish of so good and excellent a mother. It had long been talked of in the family, when Leng Tso was not present, that as soon as they were able to buy a wife for Khiau, Leng Tso should be the one. But Khiau's father was too poor yet to pay the price that Hou would demand.

After these requests So Chim called Khiau and Leng Tso to her and said,

"Khiau, grandmother will soon be in the spirit-world; she will want many things then. Will you care for her spirit?"

"Grandmother," replied the boy, "if I live to be a hundred years old, I will not for one day forget you. When I am a man your tablet will be in my house, and not only will you have all that you need, but every day I will worship you. My grandmother shall be my god."

"No, no, my child!" said she; "do not worship me. I am only a poor old woman. I go into the land of spirits a beggar, and it is I who will worship you if you care for me. Some day I hope that your father will get Leng Tso as your wife. Will both of you, my children, care for the poor old woman?"

"Grandmother," said Leng Tso, "do you think that the little girl whom you have loved so much will stop loving your spirit? When she was a little stranger and all alone, with no heart to love or pity her, then a grandmother's heart loved the little slave-girl. You tried to make me happy when none cared for me. You will find many who will love you in the spirit-world; but if none care for you, tell them what you did for Leng Tso. Let them see how much you can love, and all the spirits, all the gods, will love you."

"My child, when they see how well you and

Khiau care for me, then, it may be, they will think that some on earth love the old woman, and perhaps some spirits will love me too; but the gods do not love as we do."

"Grandmother," said Khiau, "I, Leng Tso and all of us will let the spirits know that there was one good woman in the world, and that she is our grandmother. We will all take care of your spirit. But we do not want you to die. There are no more grandmothers for us if you go."

After giving them all the advice that she could, and urging them to worship the gods every day, So Chim said, as she raised her hand,

"The wick is burning up; my light is going out. Don't leave me. It is growing dark. Must I go, and go alone? Oh, where are the gods whom I have tried to serve? Will they leave me now, when I need them so much?"

Khiau, seeing that his father and mother were unable to comfort the dying woman, said,

"It may be, grandmother, that there is a god whom you do not know who will care for you in the spirit-world."

"Oh, if there were one—only one—who would take care of the poor old woman, then it would not be so dark, so lonely. None, none!"

"Grandmother," continued the sobbing boy, "you do not know. Perhaps there is one. Shall I ask, if there be such a god, that he will take care of you?"

Hardly waiting to hear her whispered "Yes," the boy knelt down and began:

"O Heaven above, if there be a god who cares for dying people, and who loves their souls after death, will you send him to take care of one of the best grandmothers that ever lived? A worthless, stupid boy bows to Heaven making this prayer."

"It may be that there is such a god," said So Chim to the boy as he rose from his knees.

"If we find out about a better god than we know now, may we worship him, grandmother?" asked Khiau.

"Yes," came from the lips that were moving as if in silent prayer.

The face of So Chim lost its anxious, troubled look. Her eyes were closed and she seemed asleep, but the restless motion of the hand and the lips moving constantly told that she was awake and praying. Suddenly opening her eyes and trying to rise, as she looked around she asked,

"Where am I? Who are you?" and then, when she recognized them all, she sank back sadly with, "Was it only a dream? Is there no such god?"

After a few moments of silence she spoke in a whisper: "Father, mother, husband, I am coming;" and then, in a louder voice, "Oh, they have forgotten me! They are gone! I am alone! Alone!" The old look of trouble was back again. Just then the room seemed to grow lighter: the sun, hidden all day by clouds, was setting. So Chim, noticing

the light, said, "No, it is not a dream! The brightness is coming back! Dark here, but light over the mountains! Will He carry me over to it?"

There was a moving of the hands as though to reach up to be carried, and then they fell by her side. Her lips were still; hands moved not, and So Chim had gone. The kind, good old woman was dead.

CHAPTER XIV.

BARGAINING FOR A WIFE.

NOT long after the burial of So Chim her request about a wife for Khiau was talked of, and Khiau asked his father when he meant to make the bargain for Leng Tso. Jiong, Khiau's father, was an easy, good-natured man, always ready to do things to-morrow that ought to be attended to to-day, and he replied to his son,

"It will be time enough after a while. Hou may ask a very high price if he knows that we mean to try to get Leng Tso."

"Why not buy her now?" asked Jiong's wife. "Many people do buy and keep the wives for their sons long before they are married. Lin So did for his son; so did Im Chek for one of his sons. We might do the same for Khiau. Besides, we would then have Leng Tso to work, and she is a good worker."

"I have not money enough to pay for her now," replied Jiong. "It took nearly all of my money for the funeral ceremonies of my exalted mother. We must wait a year or two."

"Could you not borrow money, father?" asked Khiau. "It will not take much, and I will help you work very hard to earn money to pay it back."

"We will see, my son—we will see," answered Jiong. But nothing was done.

Not long after, Khiau one evening met Leng Tso out under the tree with the other children. Instead of engaging in play or talking with the others, the two found a seat away from the rest and had a talk together.

"Leng Tso," said he, "will not you be glad when you become my wife? Then you will not work out in the field as you do now, and Hou will not scold and beat you any more."

"Yes," said the girl, "I will be glad, for it is so hard to be scolded and beaten for what I cannot help. Khiau, will you ever beat me?"

"No, never! I do not like to have my father strike me when he is angry—he does not strike me at any other time—and I do not mean to whip anybody when I am a man. It hurts."

"But men do beat their wives. Hou did my new mother, though he is afraid of the new Hou So, and other men in the village do too."

"I know it, yet they do not love their wives. I mean to love mine, and I want her to love me."

"Khiau, I do love you; I always will. You are not like the other boys; you are good to me,

and to everybody. Will you always be so? I am so glad that grandmother told your father to buy me for your wife. When will he buy me? I wish he would soon."

"He said that he would, but father waits."

"What if Hou should sell me to somebody else? Ah, Khiau, I do not want to go away from you; and yet Hou said one day, when he was very angry with me, that he would sell me to be the wife of some bad man away from here. Please try to get your father to make the bargain soon. I would rather die than go away. Don't let him sell me away."

"Hou shall not sell you to anybody else. Grandmother said that you must be my wife; and if he tries to sell you to any other family, we will—we will not let him. Grandmother said that you and I must worship and care for her spirit. How can we if you go out of Thau Pau?"

As soon as he could talk to his father after this Khiau urged him to make the bargain with Hou and buy Leng Tso at once. Jiong listened good-naturedly to his boy's pleadings, and then said,

"I cannot buy Leng Tso now, for I have not money to pay."

"You could borrow the money. Enough men will let you have it."

"Yet it will cost a great deal to pay the interest on the money. Hou may ask as much as fifty dollars, or even more, and the interest on fifty dol-

lars for one year will be twelve dollars.* Would it not be better to wait a few years? Hou must sell Leng Tso to be somebody's wife when she grows to be a woman, and then we may get her cheaper than now."

"Before that he may make a bargain with some one else, and we cannot get her. Then your promise to grandmother will be broken, and there will be no Leng Tso to care for the spirit of grandmother."

"But we can get another wife for you, and cheaper too, who may be just as good."

"I do not want another; I want Leng Tso. She is the one whom grandmother chose. Besides, I do not wish a wife whom I do not know and whom I do not like."

"Do not like! How can you tell until you know? Your uncle Jip did not know, nor had he ever seen, his wife until he was married; and so it is with nearly every one."

Khiau, being the oldest son and a favorite child of his father, was usually gratified in his requests if they did not cost Jiong too much care and trouble. Urged on by his son's plea, Jiong sent a man to Hou to make a bargain for Leng Tso.

His slave-girl, Hou said, was just becoming able to work well and pay for all the care he had given

* This was the ordinary rate of interest in China not many years ago, and even fifty per cent. interest was sometimes charged and paid.

and the cost he had had in feeding and clothing and doctoring her; he did not wish to sell her now. If he sold at all now, it must be at a price large enough to pay for all his trouble and expense.

"How much would that be?" asked the man.

The reply, "Much more than a hundred dollars," made the man see that he could make no bargain with Hou.

Jiong, as well as his family, was disappointed.

"We might make a bargain with Hou now for the girl when she is a woman," said the father. "He would probably let her go then for much less money; and if we only pay a little down to fix the bargain, Hou cannot sell her to any one else."

Again the man was sent to make an agreement for Leng Tso. The Chinese usually get a third person to begin any important transaction for them, and not until they know the intentions of the other side will they appear at all interested. In arranging for wives the business is almost always done by others than those who are to be married. Of course this saves a great deal of trouble to the young people before the wedding, yet all the more trouble comes after. People who do not make their own bargains usually find fault with those made for them by others.

When the man talked to Hou about selling his slave-girl when she became a woman, he was ready to make a bargain.

"Yes," said he, "she must be married to some

one then, and he who gives the most money can have her." But he was unwilling to set any price: "My slave-girl is a good worker; she will be a pretty woman, though it is true she has not small feet; she is good and kind; and there will be many number one good men who will want her for a wife. They will be ready to pay a large sum for her, so I will not make a bargain now unless I get a large price."

When, after a number of lower offers had been refused, fifty dollars in six years was offered, with the promise of ten besides, to be paid at once to bind the bargain, Hou said,

"If, when she is twenty-two years old, you will give me one hundred dollars, and twenty dollars now to bind it, then I will agree to sell her to you."

The man said that was much more money than Jiong would be willing to pay.

"Jiong!" said Hou; "do you bargain for Jiong?"

"Yes," said the man; "he wants her as a wife for his oldest son, Khiau."

"A wife for Khiau! He is the wicked boy who came with several others into my house some time ago. No; he shall not have her for a wife. He is possessed by an evil spirit. An evil spirit is the wife that he needs."

It was useless to talk further. Hou would not let Leng Tso become the wife of Khiau, even though ten times the price he demanded were given. Hou, like some other men, when he hated a boy,

felt unable to hate him enough. That one bold act of Khiau was, to his mind, enough to make the boy deserve the most horrible of punishments. He knew well that Khiau had persuaded the other boys to come into his home and stop his whipping his slave, and he knew, too, though he would not own it, that the manly confession of Khiau made his own cruelty to Leng Tso appear the more mean and contemptible. Hou was a mean man, and he could not help knowing it, though he could not forgive any one who made that meanness appear in its true light.

The easy good-nature of Jiong took the failure to get Leng Tso as a wife for Khiau very quietly.

"Hou may change his mind many times before she is a woman," said he. "There need be no haste. Besides, Hou does not own all the girls."

To Khiau it was a sore disappointment. Boy though he was, his was not a child's heart. In size he was rapidly becoming a man, and in feelings he was a man. In his disappointment he thought more of Leng Tso than he did of himself. He had often pitied the girl under her cruel master, and had often determined that he would buy Leng Tso and make her his sister when he became a man. He had thought little of making her his wife, for he had seen so little love between husbands and wives that to him the love of brother and sister was far dearer. Now, as he thought of Leng Tso being sold again to a stranger, and be-

coming the wife of some cruel man who would abuse and beat her, who would treat her like a dog, all the true manliness in his nature was aroused. It was owing to him that she must suffer again. His rashness in leading the boys into Hou's house had caused it all. His carelessness, too, in breaking that vase—that was the beginning of all this. Why could he not be more careful? Why would he be so rash? he asked himself. For a single act of his, that poor innocent girl must suffer a lifetime. As he thought of this he resolved that in some way Leng Tso should be bought from Hou, and should become his wife. He was several years older than she, and probably Hou would not sell her for six or eight years yet; so he would have plenty of time to earn money and plan ways by which she might be made free. His thoughts Khiau kept to himself. He took time to lay his plans, and felt sure that some day he would set Leng Tso free. He began by trying to do Hou a little act of kindness when he could.

All noticed that Khiau became very quiet some time after the death of his grandmother; but, as he had loved her very much, it was supposed that sorrow because of his loss made him still. He said very little to any one, and kept away from his old associates. Instead of the lively boy who cared more for fun and company than for work, he became the hardest-working boy in the village. No one, unless it were Hou, was more busy than he.

"Where is Khiau?" was often asked. "What makes him so busy? Is work so plenty that he cannot find time to rest or talk?" When asked what made him work so hard, he only answered that work must be done, and, as he must do his share some day, he might as well begin now. Though quiet, he was the same obliging and good-natured fellow that he had always been. He was even more obliging.

One day, when Hou was away, Khiau, working in a field not far from Hou's, saw his buffalo loose and in the rice-field. Usually he would have felt glad to see the buffalo destroying Hou's property, but now he hurried to the place, and, catching the animal, led it back and fastened it to the stake in the pasturing-place. When Hou, the next day, saw the damage done to his rice, he supposed that somebody had driven a buffalo in to destroy his field while he was away. But as he looked more closely to the tracks in the wet ground he saw that they came from and went back to the place where his buffalo had been tied. It had been his own. Now he understood how the knot came in the tie-rope. But who had brought the buffalo out? It was the work of some friend—what friend, Hou could not guess.

This was not the only favor done to Hou by the boy, sometimes known to the hard man, and sometimes no one but Khiau himself could tell who had done it. Hou wondered what had made the

boy act so friendly. For a time he thought that Khiau was, after all, a good kind of a boy, and Hou's heart warmed toward him. Then the thought came into his mind—he was always ready to suspect others—that Khiau was doing this just that he or his father might cheat him in some bargain. That Khiau cared enough for Leng Tso to do these acts of kindness for her sake never entered the hard man's heart, nor did he think that the boy gave himself a troubling thought about his refusal to sell Leng Tso to be his wife.

Hou was made more suspicious of Khiau and his father by overhearing Leng Tso say to a child-friend that Khiau's father meant to buy her when she grew up and some day she would be Khiau's wife, for he was trying now to help his father earn money to buy her. He felt sure then that they meant to get his slave-girl, and he was more determined than ever that she should never become the wife of Khiau. One night he heard some boys talking about himself, and one repeated a remark Khiau had made about Hou being an evil spirit in a man's body, and that tigers would not kill him. Though Khiau had said this a long time ago, and then only in fun, yet Hou did not know that; he only knew that the boy had said it. So he hated him more than ever. After that Hou would receive no favors from Khiau, and tried to keep away from the boy. He even went so far

as to forbid Leng Tso to be out in the court in the evening. He also forbade her visiting or speaking to any of Khiau's family. But, as his wife did not care for her husband's wishes, Leng Tso was soon sent to Jiong's house on an errand, and she often had an excuse for being in the court after work was done. Hou, like others, in time forgot his command to the girl, and let her go as she chose when work was over.

Khiau had been toiling hard for a year, and yet at the end saw that little gain had come from his work. His father was glad to see his son doing so much, and thought that he himself might do less; so the more the son did, the more idle was the father. He was lazy, and of course had many excuses for not working—he was not well, he had business away, or it was a feast-day and he would honor the season by resting. Khiau began to think, though he did not say it, that after one day of work his father needed five or six to get thoroughly rested. His younger brother, who was growing to be a large boy, stayed and rested with his father. Work and he had been "bad friends" for years, with no prospect of the difference being settled. At the end of the year Khiau was discouraged. He saw no prospect of buying the freedom of Leng Tso by staying at home, and he knew that he must himself earn the money, for his father had given up all idea of getting the girl for his wife.

Jhiong asked,

"If I eannot, how ean I? Hou said that he would not sell the girl, so we must get somebody for you some day. But there is time enough yet."

"Father," said Khiau at the end of the year, "Niau will soon be a man, I am almost one now, and there is not enough work for us, nor ean we support all of our family here if all stay. I will go away and earn money in some other plaee."

The easy-tempered Jiong was willing to let Khiau go, only he knew that the absenee of his oldest son meant more work for him, and the past year had been too eomfortable for him to eare to take the burden of work again. Niau objeeted more than his father, so did the whole family. It could not be thought of. The oldest son must stay at home. He must eare for his parents. He must worship and care for the spirits of the dead; and, as Mi, the oldest daughter, was soon to be married and go away, the next oldest, and he the first-born son, could not be spared at all.

Khiau stayed, but made up his mind that he would go the next year if prospects were not better. The more he saw of Leng Tso and the unkindness of her mistress, as well as of Hou himself, the more determined was he that she should be set free. But when he thought that she might become the wife of some hard-hearted man and suffer from his eruel treatment, Khian felt that he had no time to spare. The wife of another! The more he thought of it, the more he was troubled. That

Leng Tso should be free, should be his sister, was not all the object Khiau had in mind, though it was about all that he would have owned. That she should be his wife was a matter of course, but that was only a trifle. Every man who could afford it bought a wife or had somebody buy a wife for him. It was not the thought of a wife, but of *Leng Tso* and of her belonging to a stranger—of her being away from him, being lost for ever to him—this gave Khiau trouble; this made him anxious to set Leng Tso free. Had he been told that he loved Leng Tso, he would have said, "True; so do others. She is good, and all love her." But if any one had told him that he was "in love with" the slave-girl, Khiau would not have understood what was said. Young people do not "fall in love" in China. Khiau was an exception, and a rare one. For young people to "fall in love" there is regarded as highly improper.*

Because Khiau had true manliness, he could love. Because he was a noble fellow, he could love deeply and make great sacrifices for the object

* Two young Chinese, one of whom was a member of a Christian church, who were not engaged to be married, became attached to each other, and the good Christian people consulted the missionaries to know whether or not they should be disciplined. A charge of deception was brought against them, and one at least was suspended from the communion of the church. The real cause of suspension was *loving before engagement.*

of his love. Though hardly a man himself, and though Leng Tso was only a girl, yet he had mind enough to see that in the slave-girl there was a true, a noble, a loving soul, worthy of a better life than that of a slave or the degraded servant of some heartless man.

The year wore away and Khiau remained at home, but each day more fully determined that shortly after the New Year feast-days were over he would go away. He said nothing about his plans, but tried to learn all he could of a boatman's life on the river. The trip made down the river years before had given him a liking for that life. Knowing little of the world, that seemed to him not only the most pleasant, but the best, way of earning money.

Before telling further of Khiau's plans, we give place for another chapter in Leng Tso's life.

CHAPTER XV.

A BABY IN HOU'S HOME.

TWO years have passed since the death of So Chim. They have not been happy years to Leng Tso. She has long since learned that the life of a girl, and especially that of a slave-girl, in China has many troubles. Hou is the same man that he was two years ago—cowardly and cruel, afraid of his wife, but harsh to his slave-girl, and hated by every one in the village. Sometimes Leng Tso's new mistress is kind to her, and again gives cross words and now and then a blow. Since the marriage of Hou, Leng Tso has become careless, and sometimes deserves the scolding she receives.

There has come to the home of Hou a little baby-boy, a bright-eyed, clear-faced little fellow. His mother thinks him the prettiest and best baby that ever lived. Even Hou has learned to smile and talk to the little one, and has been known to sometimes take him in his arms. The baby is almost warming the frozen heart of his father to life again. If his wife were only a little more

pleasant, and the people in the village would give him a kind word now and then, he might become a man again.

To Leng Tso the baby is a constant delight. She loves it as though it were her own brother, and so she calls it when no one hears her. The little one has learned to love her even more than it loves its own mother, and sometimes reaches out its hands to Leng Tso to be taken from its mother's arms. Hou's wife was glad to see her kindness to the baby, and gave it almost entirely into Leng Tso's charge; this kept the girl from the field much of the time. At first Hou refused to let her stay at home, but his wife told him that he must either leave Leng Tso at home or cook his own food; she could not attend to the child and do all of the housework. Besides, she said, the girl's place was in the house, and not in the field, and there she must stay. Hou grumbled in vain; he was too much afraid of his wife to insist upon having his own way. But when the new Hou So saw that her baby loved the girl more than it loved its mother, she became jealous and said she would take care of him, and told Hou that he might take the slave-girl to the field again.

Only for a few days did Leng Tso work there. Hou's wife was really a good housekeeper and a hard worker, though, like all other Chinese women, willing to have as little care as possible. She

found the work much harder when Leng Tso was in the field than when she was at home caring for the child, so she told her husband one day that he must leave the slave-girl to help her in the house. Leng Tso was delighted to take care of the little boy again, nor was he less pleased. One day she took him to the temple in the village, and tried to make the little fellow kneel down and worship the god as she did. But he shook his head and struggled so hard to get away that Leng Tso was forced to leave the temple. She was sorry, for she wanted to teach the child to worship the god. Khiau, seeing her coming from the temple with the child, asked what she had been doing.

"I tried to teach him to worship the god," said she.

"He is too small," answered the boy. "Don't bother him so soon. It will be bad enough if he must worship the idols when he gets older."

"Don't you worship the gods any more, Khiau?"

"Yes, sometimes I do, but I forget very often. Besides, what good does it do? I do not see that I am profited one bit by it."

"You promised grandmother that you would, and you should keep your promise, if no more."

"I promised to do it unless something that I could not help hindered; and something does hinder that I cannot help. The gods do not answer my prayers, and I cannot help them, I

cannot make them do it. Grandmother never wanted me to do anything from which no one got any good."

"Khiau, you know she did want you to worship the gods."

"Yes, she said I must, but you know she said if we could find some better gods to worship we must pray to them; and I can find better ones."

"What gods?"

"One is my father, another is my mother, and there, too, are my friends. They do more for once asking than the gods have ever done for me yet. But I have no time to talk now."

Not long after this the little child of Hou became sick. For some days it had been fretful and troublesome, but at length grew very ill. Hou So was alarmed; she gave medicine to the little one and took entire charge of it, letting Leng Tso do the housework as well as she could.

Medicine and care did not make the child better. Hou So sent to some of the neighbors, requesting the old women to come and try to cure her child. They had many remedies, but none did any good. At length one of them said she believed that the child would die, any way, and there was no need of trying to save its life. She thought that an evil spirit had entered its body to kill it. One woman said that it was the spirit of the first Hou So, who was determined that her husband should have no sons by his second wife to grow up. One by one

the women left the mother with her sick child, as though they were afraid to be in a house where an evil spirit was working death to a little one. Even Hou shook his head when he looked at the child, and muttered,

"Can't live! Enemies again! Why can I not have something in this world?"

But Leng Tso and the mother did not give up. The girl seemed almost as sad as Hou So. Day and night for the three days that the child was so very ill they watched by the little sufferer, looking and hoping for some signs of its recovery. Several times, when Leng Tso could spare a few moments, she hurried to the temple and begged the gods to save the life of the little one. Once or twice for a few minutes did the mother leave the child in charge of the girl and hurry to the temple to offer incense and a hasty prayer, with the almost despairing hope that her child might live. But death came, and the restless hands of the little sufferer lay still by its sides. Leng Tso and the mother wept and mourned as though their hearts were broken.

"My light has gone out," sobbed the mother, "and it is all dark and lonely again."

Hou, who had remained around the house for the last day of the child's life, was in a room near; but he said not a word, he shed no tears, and seemed the same cold man he had been for years. It was not because he did not love his child that he did

not mourn, but because he believed that an enemy had entered its body after the father had learned to love it, and then, to have a terrible revenge, had taken the life of the little one. Shortly after the death of the child the mother began the ceremonies for the dead. No one coming to help, she and Leng Tso prepared the little body for burial.

The father now came into the room and told the mother that the body must be taken out of the way soon.

"What!" said she; "do you not mean to have the ceremonies and a coffin?"

"No," he answered; "it would gratify my enemies too much to see our sorrow for the dead child. I will not please them."

"Do you not mean to honor your own flesh and blood," she said, "when it dies?"

"Yes," replied Hou, "but this is an enemy's work, and that enemy is watching to see how much we suffer from his evil work."

For once Hou was firm. No great ceremonies were observed, nor was the body kept long after death. Hou thought, if he buried the little one immediately, the enemy would suppose that he did not love his child, because he was in such haste to have the body put out of the way. His wife, however, insisted that her baby should be put into a coffin and buried in a grave, instead of being thrown into some hole as if it were a dog. Without a funeral, and with none but the parents and

Leng Tso to follow it to the grave, the little one was buried far away from the graves of others.

It was a bitter trial for Leng Tso to part with her little charge, and her heart was heavy when she turned away from the mound that covered the child. That evening she met Khiau in the court. They did not often meet, but when they did Leng Tso felt, as she told Khiau, that her "heart was home again."

"Everything that I love," said she, "dies or is taken away. I loved my old home, my mother and brothers—I have not forgotten them yet—but I was taken away from them. I loved my new mother; the tiger killed her. I loved grandmother, and she died. And I loved the little baby so much! He loved me too. He is dead now. Everything that I love dies and leaves me alone. Must I always be alone and a slave?"

"No," said Khiau; "one day I will have money and then you shall be a slave no more: you shall be my wife."

"Khiau," said she, looking sadly up to him, "I am afraid to be your wife."

"Why?"

"Because, if I am, I shall love you as I did my new mother and grandmother and the baby, and then you may die."

The sharp voice of Hou So calling the girl stopped the talk. The poor woman was cross, sour and hated everybody after the death of her

child, and especially did she blame Hou. If he were not such a bad man, he would not have enemies to kill his child, she said; for even she believed that an enemy's spirit had entered into and killed the babe.

CHAPTER XVI.

KHIAU LEAVES THAU PAU.

THE New Year feast-days were ended, the profits of the old year had been reckoned up, and the time came to start anew. Khiau had done the most of the work, and his father and brother the rest. They seemed well satisfied with the result of the year, but Khiau was not. While the family had been supported by his work, almost nothing was left over. To go away would not only leave one less to feed and clothe, but it would compel Niau to work; this alone was a strong reason for his going.

Khiau, through a friend, had an offer of service as a boatman on one of the river-boats at wages that seemed to him very large. He was offered what amounted to two dollars and a half a month besides his board. It must be remembered that money pays for far more in China than it does in America, so that Khiau's wages were equal to twenty-five dollars a month and board with us. He felt sure that he could clothe himself for five dollars a year, and thus would be able to save twenty-five dollars each year for his one object.

This, for one hardly able to do man's work, was large pay; but Khiau's friend told him that the work would be hard enough to earn it.

How to get his parents' consent troubled Khiau. His father was far less willing than he had been the year before, and his mother said that they could not let him go; he could not be spared. In vain he pleaded and urged that Niau and his father could do the work and care for all. Not until he told how much money he was offered, and agreed to give a part of it to his parents, were they willing to listen to his going. Money rules in China, and the prospect of money made his parents consent to Khiau's leaving them. But the money they were to receive did not win Niau's consent. That was not given. To let Khiau go would be to doom himself to work. But Khiau felt that it was only giving his brother a chance to live without doing anything if he stayed, so Niau's opposition made him the more determined.

The time was set, and on the evening before he left he met Leng Tso in the court. She already knew of his leaving.

"Oh, Khiau, are you going away so soon?" said she. "When will you come back? Will you come soon? I shall have no one to care for me when you are gone. I shall want so much to see you."

"Leng Tso," said he, "if I stayed, you could not see me often. I am almost a man, and before

long you will be a woman, and then they would not let you talk to me, at any rate."

"Yet, Khiau, if I knew that you were near, it would be something to think of. Now I shall not know where you are. You might die, men might kill you, and no one would tell me. Oh, don't go. Why must you?"

"I will tell you: my father has no money to buy you from Hou, and I am afraid that he never will have. Grandmother said that you and I must care for her spirit, but how can we worship it if you always belong to Hou or to some other man? I must go away to earn money to buy you, if we are to take care of grandmother's spirit. You loved grandmother, you wish her soul to be well cared for. Who will care for it when father and mother die if you and I do not? You will let me go, Leng Tso, will you not?"

"Why, Khiau, I am only a slave-girl—I cannot hinder you; yet I wish that you would stay."

"Shall I stay and poor grandmother starve in the spirit-land and Leng Tso always remain a slave?"

"No, Khiau, no! I want to take care of grandmother, and I wish—oh, so much!—to be free. Why must I be a slave? Why must I be bought and sold?"

"Keep courage, Leng Tso; some day you shall be free. Before many years you shall be as free as a bird, and as happy too. I will buy you."

"There comes Hou," whispered she. "Come back soon, Khiau. One heart will wait for you," she said in a low tone as she hurried to the house before her master saw her.

Khiau walked slowly away. Had he dared, he would have seated himself on the roots of the old tree and cried like a child, but he felt that he was a man now, and as such he meant to act. It was much more trying to him to part from Leng Tso than it was from his father's family the next morning. He expected to visit home again at the beginning of the new year, and he did not feel that the time would be long.

When he was ready to start he paid a last visit to the tablet of his grandmother. After burning incense and placing food and tea before it for the spirit's use, Khiau kneeled down to worship and beg a blessing on his undertaking. Believing that her spirit was in the tablet, he was as sad at taking leave of it as at bidding good-bye to any of the family.

What his feelings were when friends and home and all his boyhood's associations were left behind need not be told. Before losing sight of the walls of Thau Pau he stopped to take one last look. It was hard to leave home. True, it was not a very pleasant home, yet it was the only one he had ever known, and to leave it made it seem all the dearer. But Leng Tso was a slave-girl in that village. Unless he earned money to free her—to buy her

for himself—Leng Tso would become the slave, the wife, of another. The thought of her made him ready to go on again, and at a quicker pace, as if by hurrying he might the sooner set her free.

It was afternoon when he reached the landing from which he was to begin a boatman's life. He soon found the man for whom he expected to work, and all things were quickly settled. His friend had already made the bargain for him. A boat was to start out early the next morning, and must be loaded that afternoon. Khiau willingly took hold to help, though his time did not begin until the next day. He was strong, and he was glad to work with men and let them see how strong he was. The men were very willing that he should do all the work he chose. Had he offered to load the boat alone, while they rested, not one would have grumbled. When the load was on, Khiau was tired. He was not used to such heavy work. As soon after eating his supper as he could find a place he lay down to forget his weariness in thoughts of home and in sleep. He missed his bed, hard and uncomfortable though it was, and wondered how he would be able to sleep in that close little hole of a cabin with the other strange men lying around him.

Morning came too soon; rather, the call to get up and start the boat down stream came before morning did. Khiau determined to be a good boatman, and he was almost the first to be ready

for work. He was glad to hear the captain praise him, and felt sure that a boatman's life was the one for him.

Going down stream was very easy, as long as the water was deep enough, but when the boat ran aground on shoal places, and Khiau must push very hard to get it off, and even jump into the water, by no means warm during the cool weather of winter, he began to find that boating had some unpleasant things about it too. Yet the sail down the river was not so hard as was the work of pushing the boat back against the current. To come up stream gave the men the hardest kind of labor. They must row hard or push with poles, or even get out into the water and pull the boat over shallow places, to make any progress at all.

Khiau was not so sure that he would like a boatman's life after the first trip, and after a month of hard work he was tired of it—so tired that he agreed to exchange places with a man who sailed on one of the large boats running from the mouth of the river to the city of Ha Bun. This was easier, yet when he became seasick he wished himself back on the river again. Seasickness passed away, and he became quite a sailor. But going from one large city to another gave Khiau, who could not help being social, many ways of spending money. Though he tried to save, before a month ended half of his wages of the last would be gone. Thus it went on for several months.

One day a man took passage on the boat, and astonished the passengers and boatmen with stories of great wealth in a country from which he had just come. Four years ago, he said, he had left his home up the river a poor man, and now he returned worth more than two thousand dollars. Two thousand dollars! Khiau had hardly ever heard of such a sum of money. It was a fortune. The man told him that there was room in that country for many Chinamen, and a fortune for each one who was willing to work hard for it. Khiau learned, too, that the ship by which the man came home was then lying in the harbor, almost ready to take a load of Chinamen—and many were going—back to the country of wealth. His month had only begun, and, by taking no pay for the few days he had worked in the new month, he persuaded the captain to let him off. When he went to engage passage on the ship, he learned that she would sail so soon that he would not have time to go home and back, and he must either go without seeing his friends or not go at all with this ship. As no one knew when another would sail, Khiau determined to go to Ah Lam (Cochin China), the Chinese name of the land of wealth. Fortunately, he found a man who was going near Thau Pau, and, by paying this man a small sum of money, Khiau hired him to tell his father where he had gone, and to say that he would be back with a fortune in four years.

The day for sailing came, and Khiau, with very many other Chinamen, was on board. The passage down to "the straits" was a very long and trying one; the south-west trade-winds blew very strong and almost steady against them. Khiau had been homesick on the river-boat and seasick on the sailing-boat, but on the ship he was both homesick and seasick. Again and again he wished that he had been content to earn his money slowly but surely on the boat, and as often did he wish himself home; yet when he remembered why he left home he still felt like going on.

After months of beating against a head-wind, the ship at last reached the country sought; and there for the present we leave Khiau trying to gain a fortune, trying to make money to free a slave, toiling and sacrificing that he might save one whom he loved from a life of sorrow and misery.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHOLERA.

WHEN Leng Tso had grown to be almost a woman, some of the people of Thau Pau came home from the city of Ha Bun, and said that an awful disease was killing the people there by ten thousands; no one knew what it was, though some said that in the days of their forefathers a disease something like it had visited the city. Others said that such a disease had never been known before, and that it was a judgment of the gods on the people for allowing foreigners to live in their country. The war between England and China had just ended, and some said that the gods were angry because the Chinese had made peace with the foreign embassy instead of driving them out of the country or killing them. Some said that it was not a disease at all, but that the foreigners had poisoned the wells, and drinking the poisoned water killed the people.

These men said that very few who had the disease got well, and those who had it were sick only a day or two, sometimes not more than an

hour. Some people had been known to drop dead in the street from it.

This news caused great alarm in Thau Pau, for what if the disease should come up that way? The men who told about it said that the wells could not have been poisoned by the foreigners, for many of them died of it too. For a few days the excitement and fear of the cholera—for this was the new disease—lasted. Gradually the people forgot about it, until one day men came from the large Foo city and said that the pestilence had reached that place and very many were dying from it there. Next came word that it was slowly creeping along the river and spreading from one place to another, yet surely coming on toward Thau Pau. At length it made its appearance in the village.

Two of the villagers who had been away came back, and one of them became ill soon after reaching home. At first none seemed to think that it was cholera, but as he grew worse very rapidly and died the next day, and as the other man became ill in the same way a day after and died within two days of the time he first became sick, the people felt sure that it was the dreaded pestilence. Not long after, others became ill with the same symptoms. The disease made its appearance in one family after another. Some died within a day, and others lived for several days. Very few recovered. In vain the doctors tried every remedy,

and at last they gave up in despair. They said that the gods were angry with the people for some cause unknown to them, and had sent the pestilence as a punishment.

The people were terror-stricken. Sometimes they gathered in the temple begging the idols to save them from the dreaded disease and to take it away from the village, and again they joined in a procession, carrying the favorite god around past the houses, hoping that by thus honoring him he would hear their prayers. Sometimes, too, they met in the village court, and with gongs, cymbals, guns, firecrackers, and every means of making a noise, tried to frighten away the spirit of the pestilence. Soon the people became afraid of the sick, lest by being with them they take the disease. Many thus neglected might have recovered, but, without care, they died.

Hou, terrified at the thought that death might come to him through the dreaded disease, determined to run away until the cholera had left Thau Pau. He heard that over the mountains there was a small village in which the disease had not made its appearance. That, he thought, would be a place of safety. Telling his wife that he had business to call him away for a while he started from the village. That no one might know where he was going, he took another direction than that leading to the mountain-village, but when out of sight of Thau Pau he turned toward the place he

sought, and before night was safe in the little town. No one knew Hou, and no one knew from what place he had come. He pretended that he wanted to buy some ground and live in the village. Indeed, he thought that if he could get away from Thau Pau without losing money he would gladly live anywhere else, if it only was where no one would hate and treat him as a robber.

During the excitement and distress caused by the cholera little work was done, and confusion was everywhere. Servants came and went without giving an account of what they did or receiving orders from their masters.

Disappointment and sorrow had made Hou So fretful, cross-tempered, and sometimes almost cruel. It was not uncommon for her, in fits of anger, to strike the slave-girl with a stick or anything that she had in her hand. Because every one liked Leng Tso and few cared for herself, she became jealous of the girl, and more than once tried to persuade Hou to sell her to some one away from the village. For this reason Leng Tso kept out of her mistress' sight as much as possible. Hou still kept Leng Tso at work in the field, though he forbade her going into the village court in the evening, as she was growing to be a young woman; so to have company she was obliged to make friends with the older women of the village, as well as the young girls, and visit them at their homes. Hou saw that this displeased his wife, and so took pleas-

ure in sending the girl on errands to families in the village. Perhaps he thought that if his wife were angry with Leng Tso he would have less of the woman's hate turned upon himself.

For the first two or three days of Hou's absence Leng Tso went out as usual to the field, but, instead of spending the day at work, remained idle much of the time or came to the village again and went to some neighbor's house. This was not because she was unwilling to labor, but, like most of the people in the village, she was frightened by the appearance of the cholera, and hardly knew what to do.

One day, upon returning from the field, as she passed by her home, she heard groaning and some one crying as though in great suffering. For a moment she listened, then entered the house: Hou So had the cholera. The first thought of the girl was to run away and let her mistress die. Like every one else, Leng Tso feared that if she went into the sick woman's room she too would get the cholera. While thinking what to do the girl heard Hou So say,

"All have left me. My husband is gone—he does not care for me—and Leng Tso stays away too. She hates me, and wishes that I would die. No one cares for me here. Once I was loved, but not here; they hated the stranger when she came among them, and have made the stranger hate them. But must I die here alone? Is there no

one to love me, no one to weep by me, no one to light me down into the darkness?"

Leng Tso could not bear any more. Forgetting her own safety and her fears, she hastened into the sick woman's room, and, kneeling by her bed, said,

"Leng Tso will care for you. She came a stranger here. She was unloved once. Her heart knows how lonely and sad the stranger is. But you must not die; I will watch by you. I will pray the gods and the spirits, and you will get well; then you will love me."

The sudden appearance of the girl, her hopeful words, and, more than all, her sympathy, put new life into the sinking woman. Forgetting her pain for a moment, she turned to Leng Tso, and, with a wistful look, asked,

"Will you love the forsaken and hated stranger? Her heart is like a bird that has been blown by the winds into a great desert, and, hearing no song there, her song has long since been hushed."

"Yes," answered Leng Tso, all her child-longing coming back again; "I wanted to love you years ago, when you first came, but I thought that you did not care for the little slave-girl's love. I love you now. But you must be quiet; then I will make you well."

"To know that I have one friend here makes me half well already," the sick woman murmured softly to herself.

As their medicines seemed useless, the superstí-

tious people thought that the disease was caused by an evil spirit that was more powerful than any remedies they had. A strange way was taken to get rid of this evil spirit and cure the sick. They took off the sick person's clothing, and then pinched and beat the patient with their hands, beating sometimes so severely as to cause not a little smarting and pain. The object of this was to frighten the evil spirit out of the body. For once the superstition of the Chinese proved of service to them, for as the people got the idea of the evil spirit causing the cholera they gradually took this course of frightening him away.

Leng Tso had just heard of this remedy, and told Hou So of it. The sick woman was willing that anything be tried if she might only get well.

Before trying the remedy the young girl hurried to the temple to worship the gods for a few moments, praying them to help cure Hou So. She made an excuse for going out to the sick woman, who said to her,

"Come back soon. Do not leave me alone."

After returning from the temple, Leng Tso stepped into the room where the tablets of Hou's ancestors were, and, kneeling, whispered a hasty prayer to the spirits of the dead to help her cure the sick woman.

As she entered the room where the sufferer lay, Hou So said, but not in the fretful tone she used so constantly,

"I was afraid that you had forgotten me. No; you will not leave the sick friendless woman to die." Then, as if a sudden thought had struck her, she asked, "Did you go to the temple to pray for me?"

"Yes," said Leng Tso, "and I prayed to the guardian spirits of this home to spare you to be loved and to show that you do love—that you have a mother's heart."

"You did not pray to *her* tablet did you?"

"No; only to the forefathers of the home," said Leng Tso, who knew too well that the Chinese believe the spirits of the dead have the same feelings in the other world that they would have here; and to pray to the tablet of the dead Hou So to help save the life of the living one would only be telling her that now she had an opportunity to kill the new wife without any difficulty.

"Then I will get well. Yes, I will live. I will be well again," said the woman, hopefully. "Now cure me."

After telling the sick woman to lie on her face and removing her clothing in part, the girl began to pinch and beat the back and shoulders of the patient, at first beating lightly with her flat hand, then striking harder and harder, until the blows became very painful.*

* Some years ago this was the best-known remedy for cholera among the Chinese. The writer was told, on the authority of a missionary who had spent not a few years in China, and

The sick woman bore it as well as she could, feeling sure that in this way, if the evil spirit did not leave, yet the disease would go. Not merely for a few minutes, but for a long time, was this alternate pinching, slapping and beating continued. Leng Tso grew tired, and for a few moments would stop, soon to begin again. Whether it was the remedy or the presence and hopefulness of Leng Tso we do not know, but Hou So became better; the cholera left her, and before many days she was almost as well as ever.

Her fretfulness and unkindness to Leng Tso did not return with the return of health. Instead, the two were firm and loving friends, and the life of the sad woman was made happy again when she found some one to love. Not only did Leng Tso and her mistress live almost as mother and daughter; the girl brought about a friendly feeling between Hou So and the village-people, and the once lonely woman began to feel that Thau Pau was really a home to her.

After taking many away by death the cholera left the village. The superstitious people, thinking that it had been a battle between the gods and the evil spirits, and that the gods had conquered, gave a great feast in honor of the idols. Some who ate

who was a close observer, that the remedy was supposed to cure as large a proportion of patients as did the treatment of foreign physicians; nor is the remedy entirely without reason, as those well acquainted with the course of the disease will understand.

of the food, after the gods were supposed to have taken their share, said—and among them was Liong —"Our gods do not deserve a feast. If they cannot master the evil spirits, they should not be gods at all."

They were right in thinking that a god should be strong enough to take care of his people, no matter what trouble might come upon them. Khiau once said that he did not want a god who could not be trusted, but needed watching all the time lest he bring trouble upon those who worshiped. Heathen gods are poor gods. If they were real and lived in the world, they would hardly be respectable people; and, as for caring for those who serve them, they would bring far more trouble upon their worshipers than they took away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER SLAVERY.

AMONG those who had died of the cholera was Jiong, Khiau's father. His widow, finding that her husband had left her with but little property and many debts, accepted an offer from Jiong's brother, leased him the property for a number of years, and moved from the village.

Not long after the cholera disappeared Hou returned; he told no one where he had been, and said very little about his absence. As soon as he came back he went to his field to see about his crops, expecting to find the rice-crop fully ripe. This field was so situated that it was flooded by the water from a spring, and so had needed but little care during his absence. He was surprised and astonished to see that the rice had been cut and gathered; not a sheaf, and hardly a rice-straw, was left on the field. From appearances, it had only been gathered a day or two before, and Hou supposed that his wife and Leng Tso had seen that the crop was cared for. When he came to the house he asked his wife,

"What did you do with the rice?"

"Rice?" said she; "what rice? I have done

nothing with any rice; I have had the cholera, and been too sick to think of the crops."

Hou then asked Leng Tso what had been done with the rice.

"Has the rice been gathered?" she asked. "I did not know that it was ripe yet."

"Have you not, then, been to the field lately?" asked Hou. "What have you been doing while I was away? What do I have you for, if not to see to my work in the field?"

"I have attended to Hou So," she replied, "who has been very sick with the cholera."

"But she has been well for some days; what have you been doing since she recovered?"

"She is not strong yet, and I have taken care of the house; besides, I did not know what to do in the field."

"Did not know what to do? Have you been with me so many years, and yet do not know what to do?"

But Hou was too anxious about his rice to stop and talk longer. He asked different people in the village if they knew where it was. None seemed to know, for during the excitement of the cholera very little had been done in the field. At last he learned from one man that several strangers had been cutting the rice a few days before, and when he asked who had told them to do it they said that the owner had hired them to cut it for him. Who the men were no one knew, but none doubted

that they had known of Hou's absence, and had stolen his rice.

Hou's anger knew no bounds. He dared not say much to the villagers, but hastened home to vent his rage on Leng Tso. He blamed her for the robbery, and said that if she had watched the field the rice would not have been stolen. He was about to strike the slave-girl, when his wife, hearing the loud, angry voice of passion, hastened into the room and forbade him to touch the girl.

"If you had not sneaked off like a whipped dog," she exclaimed, "because the cholera came, no one would have stolen your rice. The wonder is that all your property is not stolen, for people know that you are a coward. None but a coward would strike an innocent, helpless girl."

The old fear of his wife still restrained Hou, but it did not stop his thirst for revenge on some one for his loss. He saw that a deep friendship had sprung up between his wife and slave-girl in his absence, and therefore he dared not attempt to punish Leng Tso, for his wife would certainly prevent him. He went down to the field again to brood over his loss and think of some plan by which he might gratify his anger. He soon formed one.

The cholera had no doubt left many children fatherless, and perhaps orphans, and he might buy cheap another slave-girl who was able to work. He would sell Leng Tso, and sell her to a man who would make her life miserable. He would sell

her to be what the Chinese call a "second wife" of a man who had one or more wives already; for some men in China have more than one wife. This "second wife" is little more than a slave of the first one; and if she have children, they are called the children of the first wife. Her they must love, honor and obey; for her they must mourn if she dies; while their own mother is to them little more than a servant. Hou determined to sell Leng Tso to be such a wife.

In the village of Auko, where Hou had stayed during the cholera season, there lived a rich man who was married, but had no children; this man had told Hou that he meant to get a "second wife." He was an opium-smoker, but he was wealthy, and Hou knew that he would pay a large sum of money for any one who pleased him. Here was an opportunity to take revenge on Leng Tso for neglecting his work, and at the same time sell his slave-girl at a large price.

Early the next morning Hou started for Auko. He happened to meet the opium-smoker in one of his reckless moods, and the bargain was soon made. If the slave-girl suited him, one hundred and seventy dollars were to be paid for her; twenty were paid down to seal the bargain, and the girl was to be brought to Auko within three days. Proud of his price, Hou hastened back to Thau Pau. Nothing more was said of the stolen rice. He was cheerful, and almost pleasant, to his wife

and Leng Tso. They wondered what it meant, but said nothing.

That night Hou questioned in his mind what course to take to get Leng Tso to Auko. He dared not tell his wife, and yet he did not know how to take the girl away without Hou So finding it out. He knew that as the bargain had been made, and part of the money paid down, he could not draw back; yet he was certain that his wife would try to force him to break the agreement if she learned of it. At length he formed a plan that promised success. He had no fears of Leng Tso, for he knew that he had the power to sell her to whom he chose, and also that her fear of him would compel her to do as he wished.

After a while Hou began to look at the other side, and to think to what a life he was selling Leng Tso. He knew that it was constantly done, that Chinese law allowed it, and yet he felt that Leng Tso deserved better treatment. He remembered that she had been faithful to him, and, although he had often treated her with great cruelty, yet she had always been forgiving. The more Hou thought of selling her to be a "second wife," the more sorry he was that the bargain had been made; he knew that the man could compel him to give up the slave-girl, and he was certain that when he saw Leng Tso the man would be satisfied with her.

Hou tried to sleep, but it was a restless night

to him. He dreamed that he was throwing Leng Tso to tigers, and that she begged him to save her from them, and when he refused she prayed the gods to send tigers to destroy him. When morning came, if he could have broken the bargain, he would have done so. As he was not compelled to take her until the third day, he waited over two days, and on the morning of the third told Leng Tso that he wanted her to go with him on business to some other village. The girl did not know what he meant by this unusual demand. Hou So objected, and said that the girl should not go. At length she forced him to say that he had sold Leng Tso to be the wife of a man in a neighboring village. But he would not tell her to whom or where he had sold the girl. Hou showed his wife the agreement and part of the bargain-money; she then knew that she could do nothing to prevent it. To make Leng Tso more willing to go, and his wife more ready to allow her to leave, Hou said that the man was yet young and rich, and, more than that, was a kind and good man; but he said nothing about his being an opium-smoker, and nothing about Leng Tso being only a "second wife."

The poor girl was troubled. Thau Pau was home to her now; she had many friends there, and she had learned to love Hou So almost as a mother. And then Khiau! He had promised to set her free and make her his wife. But where

was Khiau? More than four years had passed since he left Thau Pau, and more than one since anybody had heard from him at all. When he left he said that he would come back after one year; then he sent word that he was going away to a foreign land, but would return in four years, and with a fortune. She had counted the months of those years very often, and even counted the days of the last year as they went slowly by; yet the whole number passed and he did not come, and now there had been no news from him for more than a year. Had he, in the foreign land, forgotten his promise to the slave-girl to come back with money to buy her for his wife? Had he found some one there whom he loved better? Had he forgotten the slave-girl entirely? Or was Khiau dead?

She had not forgotten him; she never would. Since his absence Leng Tso had learned how much she loved Khiau. He was all the world had for her; and as each year passed and she became a woman, Khiau seemed to grow more dear to her, just as we love the absent ones the more because they are away. Every day, every hour, she thought of him. Every night she dreamed of him. Now he was a boy again in Thau Pau, and they were talking together under the old banyan tree; then she saw him in a foreign land working hard and slowly gaining the money to set her free. But he seemed so sad and weary, as

though he were giving his life to buy her freedom. At one time she thought he was coming with a large sum of money, but robbers met and took it all, and he came to her saying, "It is all gone; I must go back to earn more." Then, in her dreams, she saw him again settling the bargain with Hou and paying the last of the money; and as her heart was happy with the great joy of being free and being Khiau's wife, she awoke to find it all a dream. Khiau was still absent. Oh, where was he? Why did he not come back? Could it be that he was dead? Had those often-repeated prayers to the gods and to the spirits of the dead not been heard? To them she had told her love, but to no mortal ear had she ever spoken of the place Khiau had in her heart. If he were dead, she did not wish to live; and, since the five years had gone and he had not come, she felt that he must be dead. She wished that the cholera had taken her too; then, perhaps, she might see him—might be with him in the spirit-world.

"Yes, Khiau is dead, or he would come," she often said to herself. Dead! and what did it matter now what became of the slave-girl? She knew that Hou would sell her to be the wife of some one, and it mattered little to whom it should be or to what place she should go. Yet she clung to Hou So, and Thau Pau was the only home that she remembered; but, more than the friends and the home, there Khiau had lived, there he promised

to meet her, there he promised to set her free and make her his wife. If he should return, he would not find her at Thau Pau. No; the wife of another, she would be lost to Khiau for ever. When Leng Tso realized that she must go, and go at once, to belong to another man, the last faint hope died away in the heart of the poor girl. To tell of Khiau's promise, to plead with Hou, she knew would be useless; for had he been willing to wait for a while, yet the bargain had been made, and she knew Hou would not sacrifice money to break the contract, even if he could have done so.

She could do nothing but submit. Sadly, silently, she began her preparations to bid good-bye to Thau Pau, probably for ever. Hou So, now bemoaning her own sad lot, and now bitterly denouncing her husband for robbing her of the only one she loved, busied herself in preparing a last feast for Leng Tso. The poor girl could not eat, and left the food untouched. With a last long embrace that showed the true mother-heart in Hou So, the two parted, and Hou and his slave-girl started from the village, Hou So promising before many months to visit Leng Tso in her new home.

Hou's heart was touched as he saw the sadness of the young girl. He was ashamed of himself, and gladly would he have undone his deed. But it was too late now. He felt that it was mean, contempt-

ible, in him to be revenged on the innocent girl for his own cowardice; and he determined to try to make the man give up the bargain, or, if he were unwilling, at least to agree that she should be treated kindly.

After they left the village he allowed Leng Tso to stop for a long time to look back on her old home. As they were about starting she sobbed out, "*Sin khu li khui, sim-koa long boe*" ("The body leaves, the heart cannot"). Hou wished now that he had never thought of selling Leng Tso. At length the two journeyed slowly on, and finally reached the village of Auko.

Sek, the man who had bought Leng Tso, was pleased, even delighted, with her appearance, and would not listen to the offer to give up the bargain, even though Hou was ready to lose many dollars besides the money he had already received. But the man very willingly agreed to see that his "second wife" was kindly treated in his home. Hou offered to take fifty dollars less than the bargain if the man would sign a written promise that Leng Tso should never be abused in any way.

"No need of a promise," said he. "I am master here, and I will see that she is kindly treated."

Little reason though Leng Tso had to love her old master, yet the girl's heart was sad, notwithstanding all his cruelty to her, when she saw Hou turn away and leave her.

Sek, Leng Tso's new master or husband, was, as

Leng Tso leaving Thau Pau. Page 224.

Hou said, yet a young man, and, unlike many Chinamen, he was almost handsome; besides, he was kind and pleasant—a great contrast to Hou. He was a man whom every one in the village liked, but he had one bad habit: he was an opium-smoker. Already had opium begun to leave marks of its curse on his face; he was looking old and growing thin and sallow, as though some hidden disease were destroying his strength and eating away his life.

Left an only child with a large property and good business talent, he had added greatly to his wealth until he was known as the richest man in the neighborhood of Auko. In an evil hour, while away from home on business, he was induced by some of his friends to share with them the opium-pipe. When he returned to Auko he brought with him a fearful enemy. The opium-habit had already made him its companion; soon it would make him its slave, and at last its victim.

When Sek bought Leng Tso he had become the slave to opium. He had given up business and was living a life of leisure. He grew careless of his own interests and neglected his property. He was gradually wasting his means, too, in buying the costly drug. Nor did he buy only for himself. Being of a social nature, he induced other young men of the village to smoke with him, and for a time he gave them the means to smoke.

Leng Tso's new home was a large house, or rather a number of houses connected together by an outside wall, and was furnished far better than most Chinese houses. Though she had luxuries of which she had never heard in Thau Pau, yet there were in her heart the old longing and home-sickness to be back in the little walled village; more than this, she felt a deeper and more constant longing for Khiau. Sek was kind and everything in her new home was pleasant except the first wife. She treated Leng Tso kindly for a few days; but when the woman saw that her husband preferred the "new woman," her kindness was changed to harshness, dislike and hatred. She made Leng Tso her servant, and soon treated her as a slave. No work was too hard for her, no service too degrading. Nor dared the young woman refuse: she was only a second wife, and Sek So might force her to do as she chose in spite of any opposition she might make.

One day, when her mistress had scolded, abused, and even beaten her, Leng Tso told Sek of the treatment received. He rebuked his wife sharply, and forbade her ever striking Leng Tso again. From this time Sek So seemed to take delight in annoying the young woman and making her life miserable in other ways than by beating and scolding. It would have been far easier for Leng Tso to have been beaten every day than to have been annoyed constantly as she was, and made to

do the meanest and most degrading work in the household.

Thus three years passed. They were bitter years to Leng Tso. In this time there came to her a little one that she thought would make her sad life happy again, but it only added to her sorrow. The young mother's heart was bound up in her child—it was her all; but soon the little one was taken from her to become the son of Sek So. It was taught to call *her* mother, to love her, to be with her, and to treat its own mother as its servant. Leng Tso was even forbidden after a while to speak to the child, or by any means to try to win its love. In this way did her mistress make Leng Tso's life miserable. The poor mother learned to hate her, and gladly would have seen the hard woman die; she even hoped, and almost prayed, that something would take Sek So away.

Sek himself was rapidly going the way that opium-smoking drives its victims. His hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, his loss of appetite and growing indifference to everything around him, told that opium was making him a wreck. He tried to keep peace between Sek So and his second wife, but his mind, like his body, was failing; and his wife had learned to fear little what her husband said. Not only was Sek himself wasting away; his property was rapidly passing from his hands. The habit that he had helped other young men to form was ruining them as well as Sek. He was no

longer the respected and honored man he had been in the village.

Those whose sons and brothers had been led astray by the example and influence of Sek learned to dislike, and even hate him, and wished to drive him from the village. Having spent his own money, Sek had borrowed of others. But as he continued borrowing and spending, yet earning no money, people began to fear that he would borrow more than his property was worth. Some from fear of losing their money, others because of dislike to the opium-smoker, and others still from a desire to get control of his property, consulted together how the village might be rid of Sek. They knew that if the money were demanded he would be obliged to sell his property and leave the village. So one creditor after another called for his money. The wretched man, weakened by constant use of opium, knew not what to do. In vain he tried to borrow more to pay what he owed; no one would lend to an opium-smoker who was already very heavily in debt. Sek was forced to sell his property. The people had combined together and bought it at a very low price; not a great deal more was paid for it than enough to settle his debts.

Few sympathized with the ruined man. Broken down in body, and almost in heart, having only a scant remnant of his once large property, he took his two wives and his son, left the village and moved to the large Foo city. It was a sad part-

ing to Sek when he left his comfortable home in Auko. A few of his companions whom he had led astray still clung to him, and would gladly have had Sek remain in the village, but the rest of the people rejoiced to see him go.

"It was not me they respected and loved," said he, "it was my money only. When I had wealth, then I was honored; now that it is gone, my best friends turn away from me. Men's hearts live in dollars, but die as soon as the dollars are gone!"

Sek was not entirely right. The honored Sek of a few years ago was a very different man from the broken-down opium-smoker who was leaving the village of Auko with the remnants of a large fortune.

Sek had brought his misfortune and disgrace upon himself. He who does not take care of himself must not expect that the world will do it for him. Sek chose to ruin himself, the people let him do it, and when the ruin was nearly complete he complained because men did not respect the wreck as they once did the noble man.

Sek So blamed her husband in cutting words for all their misfortunes, and bemoaned the hard lot of having an opium-smoker for a husband. She had no words of kindness, no feelings of sympathy, for the poor man; she thought of her own troubles only. But Leng Tso, true to her nature, tried to cheer him, telling him that he might yet be a man

and rich again if he would only give up opium-smoking.

"It is too late," said he; "the demon has me in his power. I cannot break loose alone, and no one will help me."

"I will help you," said she; "only tell me how. Do not despair. You have enough money left to start a shop in the Foo city; leave off opium, and you will soon make a fortune."

Encouraged by her cheerful words, Sek determined to try to reform, but he said he must do it gradually.

"If you do not give up at once," said Leng Tso, "opium will keep its mastery over you."

When the regular time in the day for taking his opium came, the old craving came back with a giant's power, and Sek was forced to smoke again. He insisted that Leng Tso should prepare the opium for him, but lessen the quantity each day; "and thus," said he, "you may help me conquer the demon."

But farther on we will tell more of the struggle.

CHAPTER XIX.

KHIAU RETURNS TO THAU PAU.

LENG TSO had been away for several months, when one day toward evening there came to Thau Pau a stranger. The people eyed him closely, but none recognized him. He was yet a young man, but his face was careworn and he seemed like one who had lived forty-five years in half that time. As he passed by one and another of the villagers he spoke pleasantly, seeming to know the most of them, but did not stop to talk with any. He hurried to the house in which Jiong used to live, and, passing through the partly-open door, stood face to face with a stranger. He stopped and started back with a look of surprise, then, looking around the room, asked,

"Does not Le Jiong live here?"

"No," said the man; "Le Jiong is dead."

"What! dead?" said the stranger. "Is my father dead?"

"Yes," replied the man; "he died of cholera last year."

"Oh, my father, my father, are you gone?" said the distressed traveler.

"Are you Khiau, the son of Jiong?" asked the man.

"Yes," said the stranger, "and this was my home four and a half years ago. Father, mother, brothers, sisters, all lived happily here; where are they now?"

"Your father is dead; your mother with her family has moved away from the village. She has rented the property to my father."

"Is your father my uncle Ban?"

"Yes, and I am his son Lim. Since you went away, you see, I have grown to be a man, am married and living here in your old home."

The greeting between Khiau and his cousin was not very warm at first; each one felt that the other was an intruder. But Khiau soon regained his old pleasant nature, and in the anxiety to know about his friends he for the time forgot the loss of his father, and began questioning his cousin about the things that had taken place during his long absence. One question that he wished to ask first he could not find voice to ask at all. He had been away so long that he hardly dared hope that Leng Tso was still in the village. At length he asked Lim to tell all that had taken place in Thau Pau during his own absence.

With each new sentence Khiau hoped something would be said about Leng Tso. At last Lim said,

"You remember Hou's slave-girl, Leng Tso?"

"Yes," said Khiau, eagerly; "did she die with the cholera?"

"No," said Lim, "but it would have been as well for her if she had. Hou sold her to be the second wife of a rich man who lives in a village over the mountains. He is an opium-smoker, and will be poor some day. We only learned a few days ago where she is, for Hou would tell no one, not even his wife, to whom he had sold the girl."

When Khiau heard this news his heart sunk within him. He suffered Lim to go on with his story, but heard nothing more than the fact that Leng Tso had been sold to be the second wife of an opium-smoker. Fortunately, the room was dark, so that Lim could not see the effect of this last news on Khiau. The poor fellow felt lost, forsaken and helpless. His father dead, the family gone, the old home deserted by them and in the hands of comparative strangers, but, last and hardest of all, Leng Tso the wife of another, and perhaps the slave of a cruel mistress! He felt crushed, and wished that he had never come back from the foreign country—that he had died there and been buried among strangers. Then, at least, he might have thought that it was well in Thau Pau, and that those he loved were still living, loving and waiting for him.

It was too late that night for Khiau to seek his mother and family, but he wanted to leave Thau Pau at once, never to see it again. When he could

command his voice enough to speak calmly, Khiau began, at Lim's request, to tell his own story.

He had soon found work as a boatman in Au Lam, and at good wages—very large to him. He was making money fast, and expected to return home with many hundred dollars when the four years had gone by. Three and a half years passed, and he was beginning to look eagerly forward to his return. He had already set the time, and counted the months before he would be in Thau Pau with money enough to make himself happy. But when less than six months of his time for staying at Au Lam remained, he became very sick —so ill that none expected him to recover. He could tell little about the sickness, for he was delirious most of the time. Finally he got better, and slowly recovered his strength. When well enough to attend to his affairs, he found that the man with whom he had deposited his money had gone away, no one knew where, and had taken with him all Khiau's hard-earned dollars. It was useless to try to find the man; he had taken other money besides Khiau's, and the owners had tried in vain to find out where the thief had gone.

Khiau's loss and great disappointment nearly broke him down, and for a while the old disease seemed ready to come back. He had been homesick before, but now could not control the longing to go to Thau Pau. Yet he had no money—not even enough to pay his passage home. Besides, he

was in debt to those who had taken care of him during his sickness. He was forced to begin work again, not only to earn money to take him home, but to pay his debts. He had not the heart to send word of his loss to Thau Pau, and felt that unless he could give a reason for staying longer it would be better to say nothing at all.

Instead of going to work again at his old business, after earning a few dollars he began to buy and sell whatever he could make a profit on, and in a short time had made enough money to carry on quite a large business. In this way he gained several hundred dollars in a little more than a year. As soon as he felt sure that he had enough to buy Leng Tso and to begin life for himself, he sold out his business and took the first vessel for Ha Bun. Hardly an hour had he tarried on the way after reaching the city, as he thought every moment saved might be the more likely to bring him home before Leng Tso was sold. Khiau made his story as short as possible, saying nothing at all about Leng Tso or his own fearful disappointment.

After answering many of Lim's questions about the foreign country and eating the supper provided, Khiau went out and seated himself under the old banyan tree where he had so often sat with the children, and where on his last night in Thau Pau he had seen Leng Tso for the last time. It was late; no one was under the tree or in the court,

and Khiau sat alone to think and mourn over his losses. He could not blame himself that Leng Tso had been sold, for he had done all in his power that he might set her free. Yet the loneliness that came over him, the feeling of desolation, and the thought that Leng Tso was lost to him for ever, took from life its last charm. Khiau wished himself dead. He did not care what happened to him. He felt reckless and ready for anything. He hated, he cursed Hou as the one who had robbed him, and was almost ready to kill the man. Then he thought that Hou only did what many others would have done—did what the customs and the cruel laws of China permitted. From hating Hou, he turned to hating those customs. Most bitterly did he curse the law that allowed woman to be sold as a slave—that made her little better than the cattle of the fields. He could not help contrasting the customs of the Chinese with those of foreigners whom he had seen, and he resolved that some day he would try to bring about a change in his own country.

Late in the evening Lim found him yet sitting under the old tree, and invited him to come into the house to sleep. The next morning early, without stopping to see any of his old friends, after bidding Lim and his family farewell, Khiau started in search of his mother. In the afternoon of the same day he reached their village, and found his relatives.

They were living in a wretched little house, and were almost starving. Niau worked when forced to do so by hunger, but thought more of himself than of the family. All were glad to see the wanderer, whom they had supposed to be dead. Nor were they less pleased to find that Khiau brought with him a considerable sum of money. Khiau remained with them for a month or two only; he said that it was not home for him there. After hiring a better house for his mother, and giving her the greater part of his money, but forbidding her to let Niau have the care of any of it, he started away again—as he said, not knowing where he would go.

He stopped in the great Foo city to attend to some business and see a friend whom he had met at Au Lam. That friend had just opened a silk-store in the city, and, knowing that Khiau had some money, invited him to become his partner. Caring little what he did, Khiau consented, and was soon actively engaged in trade.

CHAPTER XX.

THE HOME IN THE FOO CITY.

LET us return to Sek and his misfortunes. When he arrived in the Foo city with his family, the man was so worn out with his journey and sorrow at leaving his old home that he had hardly strength to look for a house to which to take his family. To add to his trouble, Sek So was constantly upbraiding him for her own change of fortune. Sek could say nothing in reply; he knew that he was to blame; yet her misfortunes gave him far less trouble than did the thought of Leng Tso's sorrow and the poverty and disgrace he was bringing on his child.

By the aid of Leng Tso a house was hired, and became the home of the little family. Sek, made indolent and weak by the use of opium, had neither the heart nor the strength to try any business. Leng Tso urged him to give up the use of opium; she tried to prevent his smoking when the hour came for taking it; and for a while Sek, listening to her encouraging words, would struggle against the craving, but the restlessness and the gnawings

of the appetite for opium, and the intense pains he suffered, were more than Leng Tso could see him endure. Each day she listened to his pleadings and prepared the opium for him. After the effects of the drug were gone (they passed away in a few hours), she would try to persuade him to give up its use. Each time the poor man resolved that he would fight the giant. Lessening the amount would not do; for, unless he had the usual quantity, the craving, restlessness and pain did not entirely pass away. She told him that he must give up entirely, and at once, if he would be a man again. At last he resolved to make the effort. But, knowing that he was unable to resist of himself, he told her to lock him in a room alone, and there he would fight and conquer or die. Leng Tso obeyed, and Sek was locked in. When the time came for his taking the opium he struggled with the appetite, determined that he would not yield. But as hour after hour passed by, and he felt the craving increasing and the pains becoming more intense, he begged Leng Tso to unlock the door and give him the opium. She listened, but pretended not to hear; louder he knocked, more piteous were his appeals, yet she refused to heed them. After pleading a long time, now most tenderly and again with hard threats, gradually Sek's voice grew weaker, his pleadings less earnest, until all was silent in the room.

For a moment Leng Tso thought, "Perhaps he

is dead," and she hastened to open the door. But he was asleep, sleeping the troubled and unresting sleep that the unsatisfied craving for opium brings. After a while he awoke, and pleaded again most piteously for opium—only a little.

"No," said she; "you began to conquer; you wished me to help you. I will do it now; you can have no opium."

It was a long, hard struggle. Sek almost died in the effort to conquer, and had it not been for the encouragement that Leng Tso gave, with her constant care, he could not have lived. He seemed to have conquered; though weak and worn and wasted to a skeleton, the man in Sek yet lived. Leng Tso had saved him.

But where was the wife of the opium-smoker during this time? Now brooding over her misfortunes, and now gossiping in the houses of new-made acquaintances, she gave little heed to her husband or to Leng Tso. She gave little thought to her family, save to the child, so long as the "second wife" took care of the household and cared for her wants. Sek So had ceased to be jealous, or even to give her husband more than a passing thought. Since he had become the worn-out, broken-down opium-smoker, she felt sure that he could not live long. Why should she care for a man who, to gratify his own passion, had brought misfortune upon herself, disgrace upon his family, and was leaving them in poverty, as he was hastening him-

self down to the grave? Besides, thinking that, as she would soon be a widow and would need Leng Tso's care and service, she treated her more kindly.

Sek gradually gained strength, and life held out its attractions to him again. His ambition was aroused, and he determined to gain all that he had lost. He told Leng Tso that she had saved him, and the new man looked upon his second wife almost as though she were his equal. If he had been kind to her before, he was now doubly so. While he would not have admitted that a woman could be better than a man—no Chinamen believe women to be equal to men; but then they are heathen—yet Sek treated Leng Tso as though she were really better than himself. She was almost happy to see that Sek had become a man again; yet there was ever in her heart that one longing love for the lost Khiau. To her Sek was like a kind, true friend, and as a friend she loved him.

With the return of her husband's strength and manhood came back the jealousy of Sek So, as she saw that the second wife was more favored and loved than herself. She little thought that her husband would have been unworthy the name of man if he could have preferred his first wife. A gossip, a scold, fretful, cruel, jealous, there was nothing in Sek So to love. It is not strange that her husband treated her with indifference, and often with contempt. Though there was nothing

in her to love, yet she was well able to arouse hate, to cause misery and to make the lives of others wretched. Sometimes one is tempted to think that a demon has great control in this world, and, failing himself to make mortals miserable, he sends some of his children to earth, who succeed where their father failed.

Sek soon found business, and with his excellent talent speedily added to what was left of his fortune. But the constant fretting and scolding of his wife made his home wretched to him. She told others of his former habits and his loss of property, gradually creating an impression that Sek was not a safe man to deal with. People became suspicious of him; his business lessened, and failure seemed near.

Sek was distressed. He saw that his wife would ruin him in any place where he was not thoroughly known. Once he determined to be divorced from her, for, by Chinese law, scolding and gossiping are sufficient reasons for divorce. Leng Tso, however, persuaded him to endure the scolding and fretting of his wife, and not to notice them. Driven from home by the tongue of his wife, Sek found his way to the gambling-shops. Soon he acquired the passion for gambling so common to the Chinese. Not only did he spend much of his time there; he lost money, too.

One day, after meeting with a considerable loss, Sek was greatly troubled, and was persuaded to try the opium-pipe with some of his companions,

that in the stupor of opium he might forget his misfortunes. More desponding still after he had recovered from the effects of the opium, and distressed at the loss of so much money, he determined to try again, hoping that as he had lost, so he would win back, his money. Sek was a good business-man, but a poor gambler. In trying to recover what he had already lost, he lost still more. Then he determined not to gamble again at all, and hurried away. But he could not overcome the fascination, nor could he long stay away from the gambling-place. Others won—his turn would soon come too; and he tried again. He won. Led on by hope of gaining more, he staked larger sums, sometimes gaining, sometimes losing, but in the end having less money than he had at the beginning. Thus Sek neglected his business, became again an opium-smoker, and, besides that, a regular gambler. Day after day he was in the gambling-house, steadily losing money. But the infatuation was upon him; he could not stop if he would. The time came when he staked the last dollar, and lost. Wild with excitement, not knowing what he did, he offered to sell his wife for money with which to gamble.

"But," said one, "you cannot sell her unless she is willing, and she will not be."

Sek, in desperation, then offered to sell his second wife. One of the men present agreed to buy. The bargain was made, the agreement written, the money paid, the agreement signed, and Leng Tso

was the property of another, with the understanding that as soon as Sek won the money he was to buy back his second wife at the price paid.

Not stopping to think what he had done, Sek gambled again, and lost all the money. When his last dollar was gone he began to realize what he had done. His agony was terrible. He left the gamblers and hastened to his home with a mad desperation. On the way he bought some opium of the man from whom he had often bought before, promising to pay the next day. When he reached home he said nothing about his troubles, but his wife and Leng Tso saw that something was agitating him. It was not unusual for Sek to lock himself in a room alone, and they thought nothing of his doing so now. Leng Tso had noticed too of late that he was often agitated and seemingly in great trouble; but neither of the women knew that he gambled, or did they know that he had again become an opium-smoker.

Opium-smokers may be saved; the craving for the drug may be conquered; but the man who finally overcomes the habit that for years has mastered him must be a giant in will, firm as a rock in determined resistance to the continued attacks of his old master; he must have almost superhuman strength to endure the gnawings of that famine which seems to be wasting his vitals; he must have a martyr's courage to bear the pain, the agony, the torture, of that worse than Spanish inquisition that

would force him to recant or rack his life-blood out by minute drops. With each fall he becomes weaker; every succeeding struggle, if the victim have energy enough to attempt to rise, is shorter and with less effort. Like the strong man who, unable to swim, is drowning, he gives up the struggle, and before long sinks exhausted into that dream that knows no waking. Or it may be, made desperate as he sees himself in the hands of the tyrant who is robbing him of all and is fastening him in hopeless slavery, the poor wretch with his own hands loosens the cords of life and dies. To save himself a more lingering death, he dies a suicide.

Conquered once, the passion for opium is not conquered for ever. Like the thirst for strong drink, it may come back again. It is a monster that has merely been lured to slumber, or at best been chained. A temptation may awaken and accident may break the fetters and set the monster free.

Four curses are breathing their withering breath on China. They are Tartar rule, the degradation of woman, superstition and opium. If the former are more widespread, the latter is more terribly fatal. But this last curse is a foreign one, and some day it may seek its home. Woe be to Great Britain if God's mercy do not shield her from the punishment due for this accursed traffic which she has forced upon China! English opium has ruined far more souls in China than English missionaries have been instrumental in saving there.

But to return to Sek. The next morning the door of his room was yet locked, and all was silent within. The two women became alarmed. After waiting a long time they burst open the door, and saw him lying on the floor asleep. Leng Tso tried to wake him, but he slept too soundly. Slept? Yes, but that sleep which has no dreams. Sek had swallowed the opium to end his trouble in lasting forgetfulness. He was dead—died a suicide.

Ban, the man who had bought Leng Tso, was yet young and unmarried. He kept a shop in the city, and was a man of some respectability and wealth; but, like most Chinamen, he loved to gamble. When the excitement of the game had passed by and he found himself the owner of a woman, he hardly knew what to do with her. To the bantering of his companions he could say nothing. As soon as he could leave the gambling-den he took the bill of sale and hastened home. His father was dead, and he lived with his mother. To her he showed the bill of sale, and, without telling her in what way or where he had made the purchase, said that he had done it to help a friend in distress, and, since the friend was unable to buy back the woman, she was his own; but what to do with her he did not know.

"My son," said his mother, "I am growing old; you need a wife. If this woman is young and good, since she is yours, why not make her your own wife? If the man cannot buy her back again,

you must keep her or sell her to some one else. And since no other arrangement has been made for a wife for you, keep this one."

"I do not want a wife," said Ban; "wives are troublesome. My older brother's children will keep my father's name alive; and I wish to live for my own comfort."

"But who will take care of me when I am old?" said the mother. "I do not wish to live with Chiok, and have hoped that you would take a wife."

The matter was finally settled that if Leng Tso suited Ban he would make her his wife.

Having bought, he must see about his property. Taking the bill of sale, he went to the house of Sek, but was startled to find that Sek was dead. Hearing the mourning of the women, he felt that it would not do to claim his purchase then; but when he saw Leng Tso, he was greatly pleased with her and he decided at once that she should be his wife, even though she were a large-footed woman.

He waited until after the funeral, and then sent a woman to inform Leng Tso that Sek had sold her the day before he died to a man who had bought her for his own wife. Sek So, who had expected to have Leng Tso for a servant, refused to give her up. She denied that Sek had sold the woman; and when told of the agreement, she said that it was forged. The woman hastened back to

Ban and told him that he would have to use force to get his wife.

Taking a mandarin (a Chinese officer) and some of the witnesses of the sale, Ban hastened to the house of Sek, and, showing the agreement, which the witnesses proved to be true and the sale a regular and fair one, he demanded Leng Tso. Being only a woman, Sek So could do nothing but submit in face of all this proof. Leng Tso cared very little to remain with her mistress—indeed, cared little what became of herself at all. She had long since learned that women, and especially slaves and second wives, had no rights in China. Without offering any objection, she was ready to go at once. But the child? It was her child, and for it the mother's heart yearned. Might she take that?

"No," said Sek So; "it is my child, it is my husband's child. You have nothing to do with it. You were not his wife; you were only a second wife."

Leng Tso was forced to leave her boy for ever.

We have nothing further to say about Sek So, except to add that when she found her husband had left her without any property, she took his child and went to her father's house to live.

Leng Tso was taken to her new home and soon installed there as the wife of Ban, but not the mistress of his household. She was no longer a slave, though bought with money. She had

become a full wife, and without her own consent could never be sold again. Yet a slavery as trying as any she had had was in store for her at the hand of her mother-in-law. Her husband was usually kind to his wife, though he treated her as an inferior. He cared little for her, and she less for him; but she was his wife, and was obliged to obey him and his mother. The mother saw to it that Leng Tso did the work of the household, and spent much of her time in ordering Leng Tso or scolding her for disobedience and neglect. Sometimes she did more than scold: she beat her daughter-in-law and treated her as cruelly as though she were yet a slave. To her son she made frequent complaints of the carelessness and the worthlessness of his wife. Leng Tso tried to be kind and obedient to her husband's mother, and hardly ever gave any harsh word in return; nor did she complain at all to Ban of the treatment received. He could not help noticing his wife's patience, and was not ready to believe all that was said of her by his mother. But, as she was his mother, Ban was bound, according to the Chinese rule, to respect and believe his mother rather than his wife.

Years went by, and a son was born. Had her mother-in-law been more kind, Leng Tso might have been almost happy, if a woman whose heart is gone can be happy. Her child was all that she had. She almost lived in her boy. She felt that he was hers; no one but death could take him

away. As the little fellow grew up he returned the love that his mother lavished upon him, and brightened her life by his winning ways. When he saw his grandmother beat her he would run to his mother, and, throwing his arms about Leng Tso, say,

"You shall not strike my mother. She is good."

The old woman was almost forced to treat Leng Tso kindly to win the good-will of the child; unless she did, he would not notice his grandmother.

Once, when Ban was absent for some time on business, there came to his home a little daughter. Leng Tso's heart was full of joy now. But one day she was startled as she overheard the grandmother tell the little boy, when he was fondling the baby-sister, that it was bad and must be killed.

"No, no, not killed!" cried the little fellow.

Leng Tso said nothing, but waited anxiously for the return of Ban. Soon after he came back, as his mother was talking to him outside of the house, Leng Tso heard her urge him to kill the little daughter. At first he seemed unwilling, but finally consented. The mother's heart almost stopped as she heard him say,

"Yes, let it be killed."

When he came into the house his wife pleaded with him for the life of her little one.

"It is our only girl," said she; "we are not poor and can easily afford to let it live; but if you

think it costs too much to support it, I will work hard and do extra work to earn money to keep my child. It is our own flesh and blood; can we see it taken away to be killed?"

The husband listened to her, and consented that the little one should live. Some days after, she heard his mother upbraid him for yielding to a woman, and that woman no one but his wife, bought with his own money, and she only a large-footed woman who was once a slave, and not a woman of good family. The old woman said that he had disgraced himself.

Ban was firm. Large-footed or not, he said, his wife was good; she was kind and faithful to him and to his honored mother, and while he honored his mother far more than he did his wife, yet the learned men of the kingdom said it was wrong to kill the female children; that the gods were angry with the people for taking the lives of these little ones. He said he must choose, not between his mother and his wife, but between his mother and all the great men of the empire.

In time another son was born, and then another daughter. The mother's heart clung as fondly to the last as to the other of her children. But the mother-in-law determined that the new-comer must die. In vain were Leng Tso's pleadings. The old woman insisted that the family was becoming too large; that they could not bring up so many daughters; that they could not support them; and

that the child must be killed. She urged upon her son that a large family would bring him to poverty and ruin. He refused to have the child killed, but consented that it should be given away. To this Leng Tso was obliged to yield, and the little one was taken from the mother to become the child of a stranger.

As Leng Tso was sitting in the door one day, there passed by a man who, as he saw her face, stopped and looked, then passed on, but, turning back again, seemed to be fixed to the spot. After looking her full in the face for several moments he stepped forward toward her, saying in a half-audible voice,

"Is it Leng Tso? Here? How?"

As Leng Tso saw the stranger watching her she wondered what he meant. Thinking it might be a crazy man, or possibly some one worse, she was just about stepping back and shutting the door as she heard her name called. A flood of memories came over the woman; the careworn look on the face of the man, the years and sorrow there, did not entirely hide the stranger from her. That voice revealed the secret. It was Khiau! Her first impulse was to throw herself at his feet; but at once the thought came, that would bring shame, disgrace, and possibly death, to her. A married woman in China, unless she is old, is scarcely permitted to speak to any man who is not a near relative, much less show any feeling of affection

toward a stranger. The husband who allows it is even liable to punishment by law for neglecting to punish his wife's unfaithfulness. If, in his anger, he should kill her, probably no law would punish him. People were coming and going in the street, others were sitting in their doorways, and whatever was done would at once be noticed and reported to Ban.

"It is Khiau, it is Khiau!" Leng Tso said to herself. "He is not dead, but oh he is dead to me!"

Khiau heard the words, except the last sentence, which was spoken softly, and knowing how dangerous to her, as well as to himself, it would be if he should stop to talk to her, or even stop at all, gave one long lingering look, and then hurried on.

After seeing Khiau all the old longing that she had supposed was dead sprang up again in the heart of Leng Tso. As during an intense drought the leaves of a vine wither and die, but after a refreshing rain it sends out new shoots and branches, so, after that long time of dearth, the presence of Khiau brought forth to life and vigor all the fond affections of her girlhood. To turn her thoughts from him as much as possible Leng Tso gave herself more entirely to her family; yet it was not in her power to root out that deep love for Khiau. She might hide it from others, but she could not kill the old longing to see Khiau—to be with him again.

Suddenly the mother's thoughts were turned en-

tirely in another direction: her little daughter became ill. Gradually the disease wasted the child. Doctors were called, medicines were tried, but the child grew worse. All were anxious for her; even the grandmother had learned to love the little one; and many were the offerings in the idol-temples and many the prayers made for the recovery of the child, but all in vain. Ban, like most Chinamen, seemed to care little for his daughter, but when he saw that she was likely to die, he too became anxious.

"I told her," said he to his mother of Leng Tso, "that she might keep the child, and if anything can save its life I do not mean that even death shall take it away."

He called in two priests and bade them try to drive the evil out of the child. These men chanted a form of words to influence the evil spirit that was supposed to be in it, and then with all their might rang a bell and clanged cymbals that they had brought, hoping thus to frighten the evil spirit away. Next they prepared a feast, pretending that in this way a god would be invited to the house, and then his spirit would enter the child and drive the evil one out. After performing some other ceremonies and giving the spirit of the god time to eat the spirit of the food, the priests themselves ate its matter. Their object was to get a good dinner besides the presents given them. But the priests did the child no more good than did the doctors and

their medicine. The mother's constant watching and the grandmother's care were also in vain: the child died.

Leng Tso's grief was great as she bent over her little dead daughter, nor was the father without feeling. Little Ko Chin, the youngest boy, when he saw his mother weeping and moaning over her child, asked,

"Why do you weep, mother? She sleeps now; she has no more pain; she does not cry. Let her rest; don't wake her. She will be well soon."

"No, your little sister will never again be well," said Leng Tso. "She has gone off into the darkness, and has no one to care for her."

"Cannot grandmother go and take care of her?" said the little fellow. "We do not need her, and she scolds our mother; that makes our hearts sad"

Either the words of the little boy or the superstition of the old woman made her find fault with Leng Tso, and even speak harshly to her, for grieving over the death of the child.

"You were foolish," said she, "to wish to have the child live when it was born. It was the spirit of an enemy that entered it then, and now you see what revenge that enemy has taken upon us. Had my way been followed we would have been saved all of this trouble and expense, and have prevented an enemy's rejoicing over us. You are ignorant and always unwise."

"No, she is not," said Lin, the oldest boy. "Our

mother is good; she never scolds as our grandmother does."

"Silence, my son!" said his father; "you must honor your grandmother even more than your mother, for she is old."

"But, father," replied the boy, "mother loves us more. She never beats us; she is always kind to us."

"Yes," said the old woman, "and that is the reason why you do not treat the aged with more respect—because your mother does not teach you better. The gods have taken one away in anger, and soon they will take the others. We must suffer because the mother is not good."

"She is good," replied Ko Chin—"very good."

"Grandmother," said Lin, "you said that an enemy had taken away our little sister; now you say the gods have. Are the gods our enemies?"

"Be still, child!" said the old woman, angry with him, and angry with all; "you do not know what you say. If you had been taught better, you would know that it is not proper for children to ask questions of old people." Then, turning to her son, she said, "This body must not be buried in a grave. Let some men throw it into a ditch and cover it there."

Leng Tso remembered how Hou had buried his child, and half believed that what was said about the enemy killing the little one was true; yet the mother's heart could not bear the thought of

burying her little daughter as though she were a dog.

The grandmother's command was obeyed; and, without coffin and with no funeral, the little body was carried out of the city, thrown into a ditch and there covered.

Some time after the death of this little girl business called Ban away for a few days. His oldest son begged to be taken with him, and to the boy's great delight his father said he might go. On their way home they took a rather lonely road away from any village, and in a place where men could hide they were suddenly set upon by a band of robbers. Ban had with him two men to carry a valuable package, in which quite a large sum of money was hidden. These two men had probably somewhere on their journey told the robbers of the money and had agreed to take the lonely way so that the robbers might get it, on the condition that they should have a share. As the men sprang upon them the two carriers dropped their load and ran away, leaving Ban and Liu alone. There was a number of robbers, and Ban saw that it would be useless to fight for his property; he would gladly have given it up to save himself and his boy. He regretted now that he had listened to the two men and taken this lonely road, and was more sorry still that he had at all taken this way of bringing his money home.

But he had no time now to mourn. He caught

Lin's hand, and, bidding the boy run with all his might, the father and son tried to escape. While the others were taking care of the money, three of the robbers started after Ban and his boy. Had the father been alone he might have escaped, but Lin could not run so fast as his father, and before going far the robbers overtook them. The frightened boy cried loudly, and begged the men not to kill him. Ban, scarcely less frightened, tried to quiet his son, and, partly for the men to hear, said that these were not bad men, and that they would soon let them go again. He then pleaded with the men to let him and his son go, promising that if they did they might keep the package and he would not tell the officers about them.

"We will keep the money, any way," they said, "and the officers will not be able to find it. But we do not mean that you shall tell the officers. We will keep your boy; and if you tell the mandarins, we will kill him. If you say nothing about this, he shall be spared."

In vain did the father plead for his son. He offered to send the robbers a large sum of money as soon as he reached his home, if they would let him and Lin go back to the city.

"No," said the men, "we care too much for our heads. If we let you go in that way, you will have the mandarins after us, and our heads will soon be off. You go back to the city, say nothing about this, and your son will be safe. But as soon

as you go to the mandarins we will know of it, and then your boy must die."

"No," said Ban; "I will stay with my son."

"If you do," said the robbers, "it will be as a dead man; we will certainly kill you. We do not want you, but him only. Go back, and live; stay, and die."

Hard as it was to leave Lin with the robbers, Ban saw that it was the only thing to be done. If he went back to the city, he might in some way get his boy again; but if he stayed, it was quite certain that he would be killed and his son remain a prisoner. As he slowly started to go home his heart failed him, and the cry of Lin, "My father, will you leave me alone to be killed? Do you not love your boy any more? Must I die?" rang in his ears until he felt that he must go back again. He turned, but saw a robber with a spear coming behind as though to kill him. This decided Ban, and, thinking of his own life, he ran, and dared not turn back.

When he reached home his wife and mother saw that something fearful had happened, and, not seeing Lin, they supposed he was dead. By questioning they drew from Ban the whole story. His mother called him a coward for deserting his own flesh and blood.

"You are not worthy to have children," she said; "it is no wonder the gods take them away from you."

Ko Chin stopped crying for a moment over the loss of his brother, and asked,

"Grandmother, are gods robbers?"

Leng Tso said not a word when she learned of the loss of her boy; her grief was too deep for words. Coming so soon after the death of her little girl, she wondered if it were not true that the gods were angry with her. She determined to make some great offering, and to spend much more of her time in worshiping the idols. She felt that she had neglected the temple-worship and had given herself too much to her children, and therefore was punished.

Ban did not dare go to the mandarins, for fear that the robbers would hear of it and kill his boy. He cared far less for his money than he did for Lin; whilst he would do almost anything to have his child back again, he would do nothing to endanger Lin's life. His mother told him to have soldiers go at once after the robbers, and bring back the money as well as the boy. But he refused, and forbade her to say anything about the robbers. If they kept still, he said, the men might send Lin back again; while doing anything to rescue him would be sure to sacrifice the boy.

"What will people say?" cried his mother. "They will call you a coward to desert your child; and you deserve the name. You are indeed a great coward."

"The people must not know what has become of

him," answered the father. "Tell them that he is with some friends."

This was the story told when it was asked where Lin was.

The robbers belonged to a band of rebel soldiers who were sometimes fighting against the government and sometimes robbing the people. They formed one of a number of bands which were trying to get money to carry on the rebellion against the Chinese government.

The Tai Ping rebellion, of which more will be told farther on, is not the only rebellion that has been known of late years in China. While the Chinese are not a fighting people, yet the cruel tyranny of their Tartar conquerors and rulers often drives them to madness and desperation. It is seldom that there is not a rebellion, smaller or larger, somewhere in the great empire; sometimes two, and even three separate ones are in existence at the same time. These rebellions rarely grow to great proportions, as the people speak many different dialects, and therefore cannot understand each other, and as the government has its spies watching all over the country, so that the people do not know whom they can trust.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REBELS CAPTURE THE CITY.

FOR several years there had come to the Foo city, at different times, news of a rebellion going on in the southern part of China. It was said that the rebels had given up the worship of the gods, and even of the spirits of the dead, and instead had accepted the God of the foreigners. As years went by reports came again and again of great battles fought and victories won by the rebels. The armies of the Chinese government sent to capture and kill the insurgents were defeated. Great numbers of people flocked to their camp and joined the rebellion. When they became strong enough, these Tai Pings, as they were called, began to march northward, capturing villages and cities as they went. No army sent against them could stop them. The farther they went, the greater became their numbers. The people were alarmed, and hardly dared do anything to hinder them. Many in their hearts were glad that the rebellion was so successful. They did not care about the religion of the rebels, but did wish to have other rulers than those who governed China.

These rulers, called Tartars and Mantchus (or Manchoos), are not Chinese. Their home lay north and west of China. More than two hundred years ago they conquered the people, and since that time have lived in and ruled China. When they had conquered the country they forced the men to shave the head, allowing only the hair on the crown to grow; this must be braided in a long braid or cue. This cue means that the man who wears it belongs to the Mantchu rulers who have conquered him. Very many of the Chinese hate these Tartars, and if they dared would gladly throw off their rule, and if able would drive their conquerors from the country or kill them in it. The Tai Pings, to show that they refused to obey the Mantchu rulers any longer, allowed their hair to grow long all over the head, and for that reason were called the "long-haired rebels."

When these Tai Pings marched north they passed far west of the great Foo city; but a number of years afterward, when they had conquered a large part of China, armies were sent out in different directions to capture cities and to conquer the whole nation. One army was sent through the country near Thau Pan to bring the people under the Tai Ping rulers and to capture the large Foo city, and then to go down along the river, conquering every place, until the city of Ha Bun, on the coast, was reached. This they were expected to conquer as their last victory.

News came to the Foo city that this army was preparing to march, and that when it came it would sweep over the city like a broom, driving out as dust every one who did not favor the Tai Pings. Many were glad, and hoped that they would come soon. Others were greatly afraid, for they knew that it meant death to many, and might bring death to themselves and destruction to the city. Still others hated the rebels, and hoped that they would be destroyed long before they reached the city.

A large army was gathered and sent out to meet the rebels and drive them back or kill them in battle. As the army went from the city its officers boasted of what they were about to do. They would capture and bring every rebel back and let the people see the bad men die. They told them not to fear; no Tai Pings should ever see the walls of the Foo city unless as prisoners. All the imperial army need do would be to look the rebels in the face, and the long-haired men would at once run for their lives. A proclamation by the chief ruler of the city was published, telling the people that none need give themselves any fear; there were enough soldiers in the city to keep away any enemies; he had only sent out a few to bring in a band of robbers. This was meant to prevent any who might think this the time to rebel against the government from so doing; for all over the country there were people, and many too, ready to join the Tai Pings.

When the army marched out with its flags flying and its soldiers armed with all kinds of weapons, from a musket to a pitchfork, some of the people boasted that no rebels could stand before such forces. There would hardly be a battle at all. The rebels would run as soon as they caught sight of the brave men. But there were others who had no boasting words to speak. They knew that most of these soldiers had never seen a battle, and that the rebels had fought in many. More than that, in most of the battles, the rebels had won the victory. The Tai Pings were brave men, used to fighting, and were fighting because they believed they were right and that the Chinese ought to rule their own country. Many of the men who went with the government army were not only no soldiers, but were cowards. They went to battle because they could not help it or because they were paid for it. If there were any running, it was likely to be among the soldiers, who cared little more for the Tartars than they did for the Tai Pings. These would be content, whoever ruled, if they themselves might have something to eat and money to spend.

Every one in the city was anxious to know the result of the battle that they knew would be fought, and many were ready to run away if they did but know of a safe place to which to fly.

The insurgents were not only in armies; they were everywhere. Many, pretending to be rebels, were merely robbers, watching for a chance to plun-

der. It was one of these bands of robbers which had stolen Ban's money and son.

Some of the people in the city wished to make all the preparation possible, in case the rebels should come before it, but others ridiculed this. It was impossible that the army they had sent out should be defeated by the Tai Pings. Even if they should attack the city, the great walls around it were so high that no one could climb over them, and so thick that nothing could break them down. Nothing was done to prepare for a battle or to withstand a siege. But many a woman, and not a few men, went daily to the temples to pray the gods to spare the city. The people told the idols that the enemies of the gods as well as of themselves were coming, and that the long-haired rebels destroyed all the temples and broke down every image of the gods that could be found; so that it was as much for the good of the idols as of themselves that the rebels should be driven back.

The Foo city stood, as we have already said, on the bank of a small river, across which was the large stone bridge that Khiau saw in his trip to Ha Bun. On the opposite side of the river from the city was a very large and beautiful temple. In it there were a number of great images, some nearly thirty feet high. Among these was a beautiful one twenty feet in height, cut out of stone and covered over with gold. This temple stood right on the road that the rebels would take to reach the city if

they crossed by the bridge, for they must cross the river.

The danger to these images and to the temple, the people supposed, would make the gods feel that they must drive back the rebels if they would save their own property. The temple was the best protection against the rebels. Great numbers went thither to pray that the gods would take care of them as well as of the temple and images.

Hardly had the army left when news came that the rebels had started on their way to the city, and were only a few days' march distant. It was certain then that a few days would decide whether or not the Tai Pings would be driven back.

It was an anxious time. The army had been seen; it was marching boldly on, but how far from the rebels none seemed to know. The Tai Pings were careful not to let their enemies find out what they were doing, though they themselves learned all about the movements of the imperial army. As there were no large cities along their course, and no walled towns to capture, the rebels came swiftly on, while the other army moved more slowly.

Two days' journey from the Foo city the two armies came almost in sight of each other. There was a long crooked valley with high steep hills on either side. Down this the rebels came while the government army was slowly passing up. In a turn, and at the narrowest point in the valley, the two forces suddenly met. With a ferocious yell

the Tai Pings rushed upon their enemies. Then began a terrible battle. Shut in by the steep hill-sides and crowded up by the long line of soldiers behind them, the foremost of the imperial army could not run, and nothing was left for them but to fight or die. They met the yell of the rebels with a shout almost as frightful, and at once plunged into the fight. It was not a battle with guns or bows and arrows, but with spears and swords and knives and daggers.

The Tai Pings, sure of victory, yet enraged that the imperial army had dared to come so far to meet them, fought with all the more ferocity. They fought as though two centuries of hate were pressed into the few brief hours of that single battle. Lately some of their armies had been defeated and driven from the places captured, and now they burned to wipe out the shame of other defeats in the blood of the men who had come to stop their progress and victories.

The government soldiers, shut in, fought like caged tigers. They knew well that to beg for life would be to give the rebels only the better chance to kill them, and they fought on desperately, despairingly, wishing, hoping that those in the rear would turn back, would give them at least a chance for life. They fought knowing they must die; fought because it was all they could do; fought until they fell one by one, bleeding, gasping, dying, dead. As one after another of those in front fell

the mad rebels pressed on, trampling upon the bodies, eager to lay other victims beside them. Nor did the imperial soldiers alone fall; many a rebel lay mangled beside the man he had killed. The ground was soon piled with the dying and the dead; and as the furious attack of the Tai Pings slowly forced their front ranks over the prostrate imperialists, the ground was covered for a long distance with the victims of the terrible slaughter. There were no wounded; the fight was deadly and was a hand-to-hand combat, ending with the death of one or both warriors. No prisoners were taken. To yield was to be butchered. Neither side could take care of captives, and the madness of battle knew no mercy.

But such fighting could not continue long. It lasted only until the desperation and despair felt by the front ranks of the imperial soldiers could slowly creep to the rear. When that feeling came, the soldiers there, panic-stricken, started from the battle-field. Those before them followed; and soon the almost solid mass of men, pressing against the front of the rebel army, was scattered. Officers and soldiers, each thinking of self only, ran for life. The victorious rebels, fully as swift of foot, pursued. That which had been a battle, then a rout, became a horrible butchery. Fortunately for the fugitives, the valley ended in a plain surrounded by lesser hills. Scattering over this plain and running over the hills, many escaped the pursuing foe. Reaching a

place of safety, they gradually came together in their flight toward the Foo city.

The rebels, satisfied with their victory and knowing that the imperial army could not rally to give them battle, stopped the pursuit to enjoy the triumph. They knew that it would be better to let the frightened fugitives tell in the city the story of defeat and carry the panic there than to appear suddenly before it themselves.

After resting from the battle the victors marched to the river and leisurely moved down along the bank. Many beautiful temples along the water or among the hills standing back from the river were set on fire or pulled to the ground. Ruin marked the track of the conquerors. While villages that welcomed them—and nearly all through fear, if not because friendly to the rebels, did give them a welcome—were spared, not a temple was left. The bare walls or the charred ruins alone told where the temples had stood.

The commanders of the defeated army, gathering together as many of their soldiers as they could, hastened to the city. They expected the rebels to pursue them, or possibly by taking another route, to reach the city before them. Their stops on the way, therefore, were short. The frightened men were as anxious to reach a place of safety as were their officers.

But what account should be given of the battle? To own their defeat would bring disgrace upon

them—perhaps torture, and to some even death. Besides, it would so terrify the people in the city that they would not dare to shut the gates against the rebels. Some other than the true account of the battle must be given. It was accordingly decided to report that they had met the rebels, killed a great multitude of them and forced the rest to fly from the field.

Nor was this entirely untrue. They did kill a great many of the rebels, though many more of their own side were killed, and the rebels were forced to run from the battle-field, but it was after the escaping fugitives of the imperial army. But the rest of the story had not so much truth in it. They agreed to say further that when the army which they had met was defeated, they learned of another host taking a different course to reach the city, and they were forced to leave the dead unburied and the spoils of the battle ungathered and to kill all of their prisoners, so that they might, if possible, reach the city before the other rebels came in sight of it. If asked where the flags were, and the weapons that had been thrown away in their flight, the answer must be that, as the flags would be of little use inside the city, and as they hindered them in their haste to reach it, these had been left behind, as had also the heavier weapons. To give an answer to the question where the other half of the army was—for hardly half was with the commanders—was not so easy. They were to say further

that the battle had been terrible, that the rebels fought bravely; many of the imperial soldiers had been killed, though as many as ten rebels had died for one of their own side. And besides, many of their men had been left behind to complete their work, the honor of which they were unable to share. All were satisfied with this story, knowing that the rebels would follow them so soon that there would be little time to think or learn whether it were true or false. Thus they hoped to gain honor from their very defeat.

When the army with the leaders reached the city, their appearance was not that of those who had won a great victory. More than that, some who started first from the field of battle, and who had taken no time to make up a fair story on the way, had arrived before them. These had told the truth, and already the city was in great fear of the approaching rebels. The army, when nearing the city, moved in regular order, and this fact, added to the plausible story told by the officers, made the people believe that, after all, the straggling fugitives had, as it was said, been frightened by the first appearance of the rebels, and without waiting for results or engaging in the battle at all had run away and made up this story as they ran.

Shamed and disgraced, the truth-telling fugitives were silent or tried to make others believe that they came back with the army. Nothing further was said of the defeat. The supposed victors

escaped disgrace, and were even honored by the people. Yet there were not a few who believed the first news of the battle. They knew that Chinese officers rarely tell the truth if it be against themselves. And they knew that if a lie would save them from disgrace and punishment few Chinamen would tell the truth at all.

The people had little time to think of the victory, for was there not another army of rebels coming to attack the city? Those who did not believe the story of the victory were sure that the rebels would soon appear before the walls.

Hardly had the first excitement of the return of the soldiers subsided when a man came hurriedly into the city from up the river, saying that a rebel army was marching down the bank, destroying every temple and capturing every village on the way, and that no time was to be lost in repulsing them, or they would be in front of the city.

This certainly must be that other army of which the victors had learned, thought the people. Why should not the brave men who defeated the first rebel army go out and drive off this army also before it reached the city? This seemed reasonable, and many urged it, but they were not those who had been in the battle. These now saw that a lie brings trouble. When they refused to go, and were supported in their refusal by their officers, the people wondered what had become of their bravery.

When those who had defeated one army were afraid to meet another, then the people believed that the rebels were indeed to be feared. The untruth had not wrought all its evil yet.

One after another came to the city, telling that the Tai Pings were approaching nearer and nearer. Fearful reports were brought of the destruction and loss of life caused by the rebels, and the people became almost wild with terror. Instead of sending out an army to meet the enemy, men were sent to destroy the large stone bridge, and thus prevent the rebels crossing to the city. The immense stones of the arch nearest the city were thrown down and the bridge rendered impassable.

The frightened people had not long to wait. In a few days the Tai Ping army was seen coming down to the bridge near the temple. Without stopping to destroy the great temple—only taking time to deface the building and the larger idols—the soldiers hurried to the bridge to cross at once. Finding it broken, they seized all the boats in reach, and were quickly carried to the other side. Some were so eager to cross that they plunged into the shallow water and waded or swam over.

The Tai Pings were before the Foo city at last. But between them and its capture were the strong, high walls that completely surrounded it. Those walls were many feet in thickness, and nothing that the rebels had could break through them. From twenty to thirty feet or more in height, it was impos-

sible to climb over them. Besides, soldiers were stationed all along the broad top of the walls, protected from the shots of the enemy by a narrow parapet built on the top of the outside edge of the city walls. The gates of the city were well guarded and almost as strong as the walls themselves. To the rebels it seemed almost impossible to capture the place, except by starving the people and forcing them to give up the city. But an imperial army might attack them long before the people were compelled by hunger to open the gates. The city must be taken soon or not at all; and if not captured, the rebels could go no farther. To march down the river and leave the strong Foo city behind them, ready to send tens of thousands of soldiers to engage them in the rear when they might be fighting the imperialists in front, would be almost certain destruction. They must conquer the Foo city. But how? For some time they were compelled to look wistfully at it, counting on a defeat and a retreat over the country through which they had come.

The inhabitants of the city began to lose their fear, and to listen to the men who had boasted of victory over the rebels as they loudly declared that the Tai Pings would not dare attack the place since the army had entered it. They said that the walls would do the fighting, and the fears of the rebels would at length drive them away. The people gradually felt more safe, and grew careless;

a less vigilant watch was taken of the gates, and the soldiers dozed on the walls.

One night the people were startled by yells, shouts and screams ringing through the streets of the city. The gates were open and the Tai Pings were inside. Whether the rebels had climbed over the wall and opened the gates, or whether some of their friends within had opened them, is uncertain, but the rebels held the city. No battle could be fought in the narrow streets, and an easy victory was gained. But it was not a bloodless one. Many who went to sleep at night hoping that the rebels would never enter the city died by the rebel swords before morning came.

Maddened because they had been unable for so many days to take the place, and made furious by news of defeats that the Tai Ping armies had suffered in other places, the rebels acted like demons. Not only were the idols of the temples destroyed and the temples themselves left in ruins, but the grounds around the beautiful buildings were desolated. Not a temple was left standing in the whole city. Not content with destroying these, the rebels pulled down the houses of the people and left whole streets in ruins. The bare walls of the houses or the piles of rubbish told where thousands of homes had been. Nor did they stop with this work of destruction. Every officer of the government, every Mantchu and every relative of the officers whom they could

find were butchered. Friends of the Tartars and those known to be enemies of the Tai Pings were murdered by hundreds. Parents and children were left dead together in their own ruined homes or in the streets before their doors.

Every one who could escape from the city did so; many were caught and killed as enemies upon no other proof than the fact that they were leaving the place. Some hid themselves in old walls or among the ruins of the city, but these were at length forced by hunger to come from their hiding-places, many to suffer a more speedy death. Near the wall was an old covered ditch hidden from view. Into this damp and filthy place many crept, some to die, and others to be killed when they came from their hiding-place. A few remained until a favorable opportunity came, and then escaped. From one of these the author learned some of the facts related here.

When the rebels had finished their work of destruction, a large part of the city was in ruins and some of the streets were almost paved with dead bodies. These were left unburied, to rot in the sun and to fill the air with a horrid stench that made the Foo city a charnel-house of corruption, whose pestilential breath soon added to the already fearful list of the dead.

After completing their work of desolation the rebels rested for a time and enjoyed their victory, if mortals can enjoy victory after doing such deeds

of horror. They delayed their march down the river, not merely because they were resting and preparing for an attack on the cities along the water, but because of a superstition that they as well as other Chinese believed.

Near the mouth of the river, and on the way to Ha Bun, was a small island on which had been built, many years—probably centuries—before, a large, solid, eight-sided stone tower called a pagoda. This, however, was different from the ordinary Chinese pagodas in that it was solid and had no rooms or stairway within. It had been built, so the Chinese believed, to protect the cities on the water from all evil influence. And the Tai Pings thought that as long as this pagoda stood so long would the cities they proposed to capture be safe. Instead of attacking the cities themselves, men were sent to destroy the tower. So strongly was it built that its destruction took a long time. Before the tower was entirely destroyed an imperial army was gathered at Ha Bun, and marched up to meet the rebels and drive them from the Foo city. The side of the pagoda toward that city was destroyed, but the side toward Ha Bun was only partly thrown down. It was supposed by the Chinese that the standing of this part of the tower was the cause of the rebels' failure in their plans for capturing the other cities, as well as for holding the Foo city itself.

The imperial army marched up to the Foo city,

which in turn was captured by them. Then followed a butchery so horrible that we dare not attempt to describe it. The rebels were conquered, and those who did not escape were killed. Very many of the people of the city also who had been friendly to the rebels suffered with them.

In these two captures the city was nearly destroyed. Fully three-fourths of it were laid in ruins, and instead of a city of nearly if not quite a million of inhabitants, it had less than two hundred thousand left.* Probably most of the eight hundred thousand missing ones were killed.

Thus it is that war desolates China. Is it strange that the people dread war, and will submit to almost everything rather than rebel? Bad as their government is, they obey it rather than allow their hate to drive them to deeds of revenge that, if punished by the Tartars, will be punished without mercy.

* The author spent some time in this city several years after its capture. There were then probably a little more than two hundred thousand inhabitants within the walls. Two-thirds of the city yet lay in ruins. Street after street reaching from wall to wall was utterly desolate. The only sound heard in them was the sound of the footsteps of the two who viewed the desolation. Where perhaps as many as one hundred and fifty thousand dwellings had stood there remained nothing but the roofless houses, the bare walls or the piles of rubbish that told of the homes that had been.

CHAPTER XXII.

A LONELY WANDERER.

THOSE awful months from the capture of the Foo city by the Tai Pings until the last rebel was driven away or buried we will not describe. The story is too horrible to be repeated.

The Tai Pings were cruel wretches, yet there was some excuse for their cruelty. Descended from those who for more than two centuries had suffered the tyrannical rule of the Mantchus, they felt that not only their own wrongs but those of several generations called for vengeance. Governed by men who sold justice to the highest bidder, taxed beyond their power to pay, loaded with other burdens that had not even the name of taxes to make them seem honest, the people had become a nation of paupers. Teaching honesty, speaking fine-sounding words of morality, pretending to be pure and virtuous, many of the rulers might have taught the greatest rogues how to cheat, the chief liars to lie more shrewdly; they might have instructed the vile in deeds of darkness, and upon the cheek of the villain they might have caused the blush of

shame, as their baser deeds made even his seem to be moral and pure.

The Tartars had instructed the Chinese in deeds of cruelty, and two centuries in the school of torture taught by such masters had not left even this peace-loving people without some knowledge of revenge. Many of the Chinese for a slight offence, and sometimes for no offence at all, were beaten to death, torn on the rack, crucified, starved, buried alive, closed in air-tight coffins to be suffocated, hacked to pieces with the sword,—not to refer to many other modes of killing by the officials. Is it strange that the Tai Ping rebels, after learning and suffering from such teachers, should have repaid their masters' torture with cruel revenge? The only wonder is that they did not imitate more perfectly Tartar barbarity.

Nor must it be forgotten that the Tartar government drove the rebels to retaliation by its own merciless treatment of its Tai Ping prisoners. By its own cruelty the government forced into war what was at first rather a gathering of disciples learning a new religion than an army engaged in rebellion. It taught these men to rebel; it taught them to be cruel; and when the pupils had done their part in this exhibition of horrors, then the masters showed that the taught had only begun to learn the first lesson of fiendish ferocity.

There is an awful chapter of yet unwritten history in China, and the depopulated villages, the

ruined cities,* the roofless houses, the crumbling walls, the masses of rubbish left in the inhabited towns, form the records to be searched by the future historian. But he can never tell of the agonies suffered, nor can he say how many millions were offered a sacrifice, that the Mantchus might continue to hold their feet upon the necks of an oppressed people. Nor are the records yet finished. Some day there will arise another rebellion, and no Tartar-paid troops, disciplined by an American Ward and commanded by an English Gordon, will put it down. That rebellion may repeat the horrors of the Tai Ping uprising, but there will be no Mantchu triumph to end it. And then it will be seen that the Chinese Samson who has been grinding in the prison-house of the Tartar conquerors is not blind. He will escape when he pulls down the pillars and brings destruction on those whom he has served. The nations will learn too that he is no longer the fettered Samson making sport for those who would ridicule, but a giant to be honored —a giant whose just wrath is to be dreaded.

But we owe an apology to our readers for going so far and continuing so long away from the line of our story.

* The author was told some time since by a British consul who had traveled through the interior of China several years after the rebellion was put down that he visited a number of ruined cities in which there was not a human being living; all had been killed or driven away during the rebellion.

Where, during all this war and horror were Leng Tso and her little family? When the screams were heard in the city, Ban hurried into the street. He guessed what the noise meant, and hastened back to tell his family. The rebels were in the city; they had entered in the night, and before morning, he said, all would be killed. To try to escape in the darkness was the only hope for them, and they must try at once to reach the gates. They might in some way get through in the excitement, or, if that failed, perhaps they might find their way to the top of the wall and let themselves down by a rope.

As quickly as possible they gathered together a few things that were most needed; these were tied in a bundle and given to Leng Tso. Ban took his money and a rope with which to let themselves from the wall, and, giving the boy to the care of the grandmother, all started from their home, agreeing, if they were separated, to meet at a certain gate, or, if not there, at a place near the wall.

Trying to keep as far as possible from the noise, and going as rapidly and quietly as they could, they hurried along through the dark streets. Here and there only were any people met, and these seemed too much frightened to notice the little company. The rest were probably hiding in their homes or had already escaped from them.

All went well until they came to a broader street. Here a number of men were gathered: they were

Tai Pings. Before Ban had time to run back the men caught him. His mother, with Ko Chin, was a short distance behind, and farther back still was Leng Tso, carrying her bundle. When they saw the soldiers take Ban, both women started back. In a moment Leng Tso turned and said, as she reached out her hand to the child,

"Let me take him."

"No," said the old woman; "I can take better care of him. Hurry on, lest the soldiers capture us too."

When far away from the soldiers the two women stopped to consult as to what was to be done. They dared not try to reach the gate, nor yet the wall. Besides, Ban was a prisoner. They could not escape in the night without him. There was only one thing they could do, and that was to go back to their home; perhaps he might be set free, and he would find them there more easily than at the gate or by the wall. They returned, and waited anxiously for the morning. No son, husband, father came. Daylight came, and with it the awful uncertainty about Ban.

"He must be found," said his mother. "I am too old to go around to search for him; besides, I am a small-footed woman, and the rebels, if they see me, will be more likely to kill me. They will think that you belong to the poor women if you go barefooted and dressed in poor clothes."

Leng Tso was afraid to go; besides, she did not

see how it would be possible for her, a weak woman, to do anything to save her husband from the rebels. And where should she go to find him? In vain she urged that it would be useless to attempt anything, and would only risk her own life.

"And is not the life of my son and this boy's father worth anything?" asked the mother-in-law. "After he has cared for you so long, are you not willing to risk anything to save him? If he is gone, what can you do? What will his boy do for a father? What shall I do? Go! seek my son, or be unworthy the name of a wife and mother."

Leng Tso felt that she must obey. How gladly would she have listened to Ko Chin: "Mother, please do not leave me. I am your only boy. If the rebels have taken my father, they may take you. Where then shall I go?"

"You would have me yet," said his grandmother.

"But I want my mother and my father," replied the boy.

"Your mother is going to find your father," said the old woman.

Giving Ko Chin a long embrace, the mother went tremblingly out into the street. Where should she go? What should she do? She went, as she could think of nothing else to do, to the place where Ban was captured by the rebels, but saw nothing of him, of course. In the doorway of a house along the street she saw a friend, who told her to come in. In low tones the two women talked of the capture

of Ban by the rebels, and each tried to encourage the other with the hope that he would be set free again.

"But it is useless," said her friend to Leng Tso, "to try to find him; the rebels have possession of the whole city, and they will not let people go around the government buildings."

Then she told Leng Tso that her own husband was secretly one of the Tai Pings, and had gone out to join them.

"Perhaps Ban will do the same, and then his life and the lives of you all will be spared," said she. "But go home, and, to make sure of it, bring your mother-in-law and your boy here. They will be safe in the home of a Tai Ping. Before many months the Tai Pings will rule the whole of the Middle Kingdom."

Leng Tso hurried home, comforted with the hope that Ban had joined the Tai Pings and would yet be saved. But when she reached it the door stood wide open, and as she entered neither Ko Chin nor her mother-in-law appeared. Through the whole house she searched, but could find neither of them, and nothing to show where they had gone or why they had left. In the street she called to them, but no answer came. Thinking that perhaps they had gone out for a few moments and would soon be back, she waited for their return. The minutes lengthened into hours. Leng Tso waited yet. She hardly dared go out into the

street, for a dread of meeting the Tai Ping soldiers came over her; yet she felt that something must be done. Perhaps they had gone to the house of some near neighbor; she would look for them there. She was surprised to find some houses with doors locked, and others, like her own home, with the doors standing wide open, and no one to be seen or heard anywhere around. What could this all mean?

After going to a number of houses, to find no one in or doors locked, she saw a lame old woman looking through the crack of a door. Leng Tso knew her, and asked to be admitted. At first the old woman would not, until Leng Tso told her that there was nobody with her and not any person to be seen in the street. Softly opening the door a little way, the old woman caught hold of her and hurriedly pulled Leng Tso in, and at once closed and barred the door.

"Do you know where my husband's mother and Ko Chin are?" asked Leng Tso.

"No," answered the woman, "but they have run away probably, as all the rest in the street have done. All of my family have gone, and I do not know where."

Then the old woman told her that a short time before a man came running through the street calling out, "Run! run! The rebels are coming through this street to kill every one!" and everybody who could ran away. Some locked their

doors, and others did not even take time to shut them. She knew that she was too lame to run, and would be caught and killed in the street; so if she must be killed, she would die in her home. Shortly after the man came the rebels did go through the street, but as they saw, by the appearance of the houses, that the people had run away, they hurried on, hardly stopping to look into the open doors. What had become of the people or rebels she did not know. The woman told Leng Tso not to go out and look for her friends, as it would be impossible to find them and she might be caught by the rebels. Perhaps at night the people of the street who had hid away would come back to their homes, and her mother-in-law and son with them.

To wait seemed the best thing to do; and through the long day the two women waited and hoped and feared. As it was growing dark one after another of the people came back, though many were missing. Some were prisoners in the charge of rebel soldiers, and some had been killed as they tried to escape. Leng Tso's child and mother-in-law did not come back, and no one knew where they were. Nor had anything been seen or heard of Ban.

That night was a long and terrible one to Leng Tso. She did not sleep, but all through the slow-moving hours she waited in awful suspense. Every little while she heard footsteps running swiftly through the street, and then would hear a blow, as though a club, or sometimes a sword, struck some

human form; a groan, a scream or a brief struggle followed and then silence again. In the darkness many tried to escape, but the city was filled with rebel soldiers, who were scattered through all the streets to prevent the people gathering together or attempting to escape.

The next day Leng Tso heard nothing of her boy or of her husband and his mother. She never saw them again, she never heard from them again. What was their fate she never learned, nor are we able to tell. Perhaps her child was adopted by some rebel, and when the Tai Pings were driven from the city he was able, with many others, to escape. Ban too may have joined them and escaped at last. They, on their part, may have supposed that Leng Tso was killed with the many thousands who perished. It is certain that she never knew what became of them.

During those months of horrors Leng Tso remained in the city. She had nowhere else to go; this was her only home. Yet she was free. No one had a right to buy or sell her again, and there was no one, unless rebels hindered, who could forbid her to go and do as she pleased. Free after nearly forty years of slavery! But what cared she for freedom now? Her family had been taken from her; her children were dead or prisoners; her husband was missing. And Khiau? Though for years she had not seen or heard from him, yet she had not forgotten him. Though only

a Chinese woman, yet Leng Tso was a *woman*, and a true woman. A true woman's soul is the same in every land, be she a queen on the throne or only a slave in the Chinese rice-field. Circumstances may change, tastes may not remain the same, but death only can change the love of a noble soul.

When the rebel rule had become somewhat settled in the city, Leng Tso's fears gradually passed away, and she went about the streets again, hoping to learn something of her child and her husband. Yet the timid woman dared not go near the government buildings. She was now becoming almost an old woman, and by Chinese customs, was allowed to go as she chose about the streets; yet she never felt safe. The rebels were every day capturing and killing people who were supposed to be enemies of the Tai Pings, and at any time she might be taken; though of this there was less danger for her, because, as she was a large-footed woman—that is, her feet had never been bound to make them small, as with the better class of Chinese women—the Tai Pings would think her poor and more likely to be their friend.

Leng Tso had many to sympathize with her in her loneliness. There were others who had lost husbands and children, and who were the only ones left of their families. But, different from many, she had her home yet, while others were houseless.

Their homes had been pulled down or burned by the rebels. While hers remained she was always ready to share it with others, and many a poor creature thanked the kind woman for a shelter and for food. While she had anything none whom she could help need want. But the food in the house did not last, and the small sum of money that Ban had neglected to take when they tried to escape was soon used, and Leng Tso herself was reduced almost to want.

At length came the second capture of the city, and the Tai Pings were driven out. Worse deeds than they had done followed their defeat. In the two captures the city seemed like the wheat ground between the two stones of the mill; and, as though once crushing between them was not enough, to complete the work of destruction the stones themselves were changed: the lower one, that had stood still, was placed above and driven with a fury upon the other, and the crushed city seemed ground to destruction.

Through all Leng Tso lived; but when the Tartars again ruled and peace was restored, she too was homeless; her house and all of Ban's property were destroyed. Leng Tso was a beggar now. Many whom she had befriended would gladly have cared for her wants, but, like her, they too were homeless, they too were starving; while the vast multitude of her acquaintances and friends were gone, dead beneath the ruins of their

homes. Though poor, she was strong and willing and able to work.

Some time after the rebels had been driven out of the city, as Leng Tso was going through the streets trying to get something to do to keep her from starving, she came in front of a house that was entirely open to the street. In it, sitting on wooden benches, and many who could find no seats standing, she saw a large crowd of men. Back in the room stood a strangely-dressed man; he was different from any one whom Leng Tso had ever seen. She thought he must be a foreigner. She had heard people say that foreign men sometimes entered the city. As she came up this man was talking or reading, she did not know which, but he stopped almost immediately and sat down, so that she was unable to see him. As soon as he was seated some of the people began to sing. The singing was different from any that she had ever heard. She could understand only a very little of it, but she heard the words, "*O-lo Siong-te, kiu lang*" ("Praise Upper Ruler"—*i. e.*, God—"save men").

The singing made her wonder what all this meant. It was a different gathering from any she had ever seen. Could it be that these people were worshiping a foreign god? She had heard of a temple and a few people in the city who worshiped some foreign god in it, but never knew where it was, nor had she cared enough to ask any-

Leng Tso in the Mission Chapel. Page 292.

thing about the god. After the singing the foreigner arose, and, reaching out his hands to the people said, "*Ya tai-ke, lai ki-to Siong-te*" ("Now, great family, come pray to the Upper Ruler"). While the man was praying some of the people near him bowed their heads, but others looked around to see what was going on, and still others near the street were talking. Leng Tso crowded past some of the men to see the god—for she was sure that this was the temple of which she had heard—but could see no idol and no tablet. The man stood up and was praying with closed eyes, but to no idol whatever. He spoke her own language too, and she could understand almost every word. How different the prayer was from any she had heard offered to the gods of China! The man seemed to know the Upper Ruler, and spoke to him as a friend. But he did not so much pray for good things to eat and wear as that people might be forgiven and learn of a Saviour.

It was a strange prayer to Leng Tso. When it was ended the people sang again; then the foreigner spoke for a long time to them. He told of a city that, like the Foo city, had great walls, but no enemies could capture it; no fighting was ever seen there; no dead bodies in the street; no ruined homes, no mourning people, no mothers weeping for their lost children. Leng Tso could not keep back the tears as she thought of her own lost boys, and she thought, if she only could have gone to

that city before she lost her children, she might still have them. But now that they were gone she did not care to go to the place of which the man spoke. After a while she listened again, as the foreigner said that no one suffered, none were hungry, in that city—none were sick, none died. Then he said that any one could go to it who wished. It was the city of the Upper Ruler, who had invited all to it, but he wanted no bad people in it. At the gates were angels, who would keep out all who were not good; none were good enough to enter, but the Son of the Upper Ruler, who loved people as his Father did, had promised to prepare every one for this city who would ask. The man, as he closed, told them that this city was heaven, and the Upper Ruler was the great Being who created all things, and his Son is the Saviour of men. To reach heaven they must ask God, the Upper Ruler, and not idols, to forgive their sins, to help them keep from sinning, and then they must ask this Saviour of men to take them to the good city. They must trust all to him, believing that he would certainly do it.

This was strange doctrine to Leng Tso. Was that foreigner telling the truth? or was he talking because he was paid for it? She wished to hear more and to ask him further about the happy city, but when the meeting closed all the people around her went out; only those near the speaker stayed; so she thought that she must go too. She de-

termined to go to that place again the next day and try to hear more.

The next day she went, but the doors were shut. There was service in this Christian chapel—for such it was—every day, though not all of the time. The doors were closed after the service except on the Sabbath, when the chapel was kept open all the day. It was Sunday when Leng Tso first visited the chapel. For several days she went, but each time before or after the service, and each time she found the place shut. She longed to hear more, and longed to ask that foreigner if everybody was bad. She did not think that she was; she did not know when she had done what was not right. True, she had often been angry with her mother-in-law and wished her dead, and so too of Sek So; but this God of whom the man told did not know about that. She had not done anything to harm either of them, and the God probably had not heard, or, if he had, must long ago have forgotten, the unkind things said about them. Yet he must be a great God if he made the world, and it might be that he knew more than she thought he did. Then, too, she wished to understand about asking this Saviour.

One day, seven days after she had heard the foreign man speak, she found the chapel open and the people singing. There was no foreigner there, and not many people in the chapel. A Chinaman spoke. He began by reading from a book the words "For

God so loved the world." Then he stopped and said:

"That one word 'so' is a small word, but it is a *full* word. The gates of this city are small, but had they been kept shut how different would the Foo city have been to-day! Great things come from small, and the greatest thing the world has ever known comes from this small word. God *so* loved the world. How? The rest tells us: 'That he gave his only-begotten Son.' Can we tell how much he loved? You love your boy—how much? What would you sell him for? Would you give him to save somebody? What! give your own son for some one's life? You would lose your son then. What if that some one were a stranger? Would you do it then? If it were an enemy, would you do it? What! your own son for an enemy's life? No, never! But God did. That is the way he loved the world.

"Suppose our own exalted and noble emperor had said, when the long-haired men were in the city, 'I love those rebels. They are very bad—they should be punished; but I love them so much that I want to save them. They have broken my laws and all ought to die; somebody must die. I love them so much that I will give my own son to die for them. If he had given his son to die for rebels, what would you have thought of the emperor's love? You would have said, 'He so loved the rebels that he gave his own son to die for them.'

So loved! You could not tell how much that 'so' was unless you were the emperor yourself. Thus we cannot tell how much God loved when he *so* loved."

Then the speaker explained why some one must die for men—that all were sinners.

"Sinners," said he, "and you do not know it. So men sick and delirious with fever do not know that they are sick. But they need medicine; so do you. Jesus came to bring it down from heaven. It is the medicine of faith—giving yourself into the hands of Jesus. Ask him for the medicine, and he will give it; then you will be saved.

"But you say, 'I don't feel that I am a sinner.' So the man with a fever does not feel sick when he is delirious, but he knows that he was when the delirium is gone; then he is getting better. So when you begin to feel yourselves sinners it is a good sign. You must ask God to show you that you are sinners; then to show you how to trust in Jesus; then trust in him all the time and keep from sinning, and you shall be saved. It is the easiest way of being saved that there can be, for God made it. He made it so for people like us, and for everybody who cannot do much. And that too shows how God *so* loved, *not some people*, but the *world*—everybody; so he made a way for everybody to be saved. But all must believe, and he even helps them to do that."

In this simple way did the unlearned man preach the gospel.

Leng Tso listened to every word. Some of it she believed and some she did not understand, while she thought some things were not true. How could this unlearned man know so much about God? But that was new—and oh so different from anything that she had ever heard!—about a God really loving men, and loving them, too, so much. It was just the thing she had often longed to know—if there were any god who loved, really loved, people. This one did—that is, the man said he did. It must be true, if God had sent his Son to die for men. Would she have given one of her boys to die for anybody? No, not to save a world! How much God must love if what the man said were true!

After the meeting closed the speaker invited all who wished to hear more about God's love, or who wished to know how to be saved, to stay and talk with him. Leng Tso was glad to stay. Her first question was:

"How do you know that the story about God's love is true? Who told you?"

The man told her of God's book, the Bible, and read some from it, for he saw that she knew very little about the gospel. Then he said,

"If any one tells you about a thing, and you try it and find each fact as he told you, do you not believe he told the truth? So it is with the Bible.

I have tried it, and find it tells me the truth, as far as I can feel and understand; so I believe it. If you will try, you will find that it is true."

"But I cannot read," said Leng Tso.

"Yet you can hear it read, and you can try that."

"Am I too old to learn to read?" she asked.

"No; some who are much older than you have learned."

"But where can I learn? Can I learn here?"

"Yes; we have a school, and you may come."

"I am poor, and cannot pay."

"We do not charge any pay, nor do we want any money for it."

"No money for what you do! Why do you do it, then? Who pays?"

"People in foreign countries whom God has taught to love others as he loved the world give the money to pay."

"Then those people believe that we need this doctrine? They must believe it themselves if they give money to send it to others. It is a good doctrine if it makes people do so."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE STRUGGLE AND THE VICTORY.

AFTER talking with the preacher the lonely woman felt more happy than for months past. The thought that there was a God who loved her, and loved her so much, was wonderful; she could not think of it enough. And then, too, the love of Jesus—how great it was! To die for sinners—sinners who did not love him, sinners who could pay nothing back!—was there ever such love? He must be God; no man could love so much, and love every one with such love. From the love of God she began to think of the sinners to whom that love was shown. If it took so much to save men, how utterly lost they must have been! What sinners!

"But," said she, "I am one. I must be one if Jesus died for me. A sinner? What sins have I? When have I been bad?"

The Chinese are not taught, except as the gospel teaches them, that they are sinners. They hardly ever think that they do any wrong against the gods, and, as they know nothing of the true God, cannot know, until taught of him, that they

have sinned against God. They know that there is a right and a wrong; yet so little is said even of these in China that the people do not think much about either, except when right or wrong doing affects them.

It is not strange that Leng Tso did not at first consider herself a sinner. Like men walking in the dark, upon whose path a light flashes suddenly, showing that they are on the edge of a precipice, so people sometimes are startled suddenly as by the gospel light they see themselves near destruction. The light does not make—it only shows—the danger; so the gospel only shows the people their danger and the way of safety. If some are suddenly aroused, others are slowly awakened; as by the dawning of daylight the danger is seen, so the gospel truth gradually shows to some what sinners they are, how great their danger is, and where they may find salvation.

Thus it was with Leng Tso. She could not understand that she had been a great sinner. True, she had hated her mother-in-law and wished her dead—so too of Sek So; yet almost every one would have done the same. She had good reason for hating. But God must have known that she was a sinner, had done many wicked things, or he would not have sent his Son to die for her. Then she remembered that the missionary had said that God wished every one to be pure. Had she been pure? No; she had not been pure. She had in

anger spoken many impure words, had harbored many such thoughts. Yes, she was a sinner. Worshiping idols—that was sin. Telling untruths, trying to cheat, were sins. How many of these sins she could remember!

As, when we approach a cemetery, first the larger monuments are seen, then the smaller and the smaller still, until the lowest stone becomes visible, making us to realize the multitude of the dead, so was it with Leng Tso as she looked over her buried sins. One by one the greater sins, then the lesser and the lesser still (as they appeared to her), came crowding in upon her memory, until her past life seemed like a vast cemetery of buried deeds.

How she wished that she might live her life over again! how she wished those sins were blotted out! The more she thought of them, the greater did they appear and the larger their number. She began to pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Every evening she met with those who gathered for worship in the chapel, and no heart prayed more earnestly for pardon than did hers. She talked with the preacher and with other Christians, trying to find the way to be forgiven. Each one told her to trust in Jesus, but she could not understand what this meant. She did not know how to do it. When they told her about faith, she wished that they would make plain to her what *faith* is. No explanations seemed to help her. Oh, that one word! If she could know what it meant, then

there would be hope and light. When told that she must go to Jesus Christ, she said,

"How can I get to him? It seems as though between him and me there is a great wall that hides him from me—will not let me go to him, or even allow my voice to reach him. If I could see Jesus once, I would throw myself at his feet, and perhaps he would listen—perhaps would pardon and save even such a sinner as I am."

So great became her distress that she could think of nothing else. She hardly worked or ate. At every meeting she hoped to find light or hear something that would help her understand what it is to believe in Jesus. It was said that one of the foreign missionaries would spend a Sabbath at the chapel, and hold an inquiry-meeting before he administered the Lord's Supper. To that day Leng Tso looked eagerly forward, and when it came, and with it the missionary and the inquiry-meeting, she felt that this was her time.

It must be noted that Leng Tso trusted in the day and the place, as well as in the missionary, instead of going to the Saviour for relief.

When questions were asked she felt afraid to answer, often gave replies that she knew were not right, and sometimes could say nothing at all. The missionary thought that she knew very little about the gospel, and tried to explain to her what she had often heard already. But the one thing that she wanted to know he did not explain. How she

wished to ask him what faith is! but she could not make her lips say the words, until, just as the meeting was closing, she said in a low voice,

"*Sian-si, sin si sim-mih?*" ("Teacher, faith is what?")

He did not understand her meaning, and supposed that she wished to know something about faith, and not that she was anxious to know just how to throw herself on Christ's mercy and love. In a few words he told her about Jesus dying for sinners, and that to be saved they must trust in him, and in nothing else, for salvation. All that he told her she had known before, but he did not tell *how* she must trust—did not so explain it that she could understand just what and how she must do to believe in Jesus.

The meeting closed, the day ended, the missionary left the city, and Leng Tso did not yet know how to trust in the Saviour. The trouble of her heart had really been made greater by the missionary's visit. Was he too unable to explain faith to her? she asked herself. If she could not learn from such a wise teacher the way to Jesus, then her case seemed hopeless. Perhaps her sins were too great? Perhaps it was not meant that she should be saved? For this reason God would not let her understand what it is to trust in a Saviour. Or it might be that Jesus had forgotten her when he died for the world. It would not have been strange if he had forgotten many thousands, as there were so many to

think about; it was wonderful, rather, that he loved and thought of so many. That she, the slave-girl, the poor widow, should have been passed by was very natural. What was she, that Jesus should think of her? Perhaps because she had been forgotten the way to Jesus was thus kept closed, lest, seeing him, she should love him so much; and then the disappointment at not being saved would be all the greater.

As this thought came to her mind she said,

"God is good even in that. How good he is! How good to save so many, even though one poor worthless sinner is left to perish! One only? No; ten thousand. But does God leave them, or they refuse him? *They* are unwilling."

Suddenly came to her mind the thought, "If God is more willing to save than they are to let him save, can it be that he will refuse any who pray to be saved?" No, she could not believe that.

In this way she reasoned with herself. Yet the one great difficulty remained: she did not understand how to give herself to the Saviour for pardon and salvation. Perhaps it would be as true to say she did not try to give all into the Saviour's care. She had some faith, but did not use it, and her faith remained weak. Faith, like other powers that we have, grows stronger by using. Had she left her soul, with all its sins, in the hands of the Saviour, with the feeling that only he could save,

only he could forgive, and then prayed him to keep his promise, Leng Tso would have found that Jesus received and saved her.

Friends were deeply interested in her, and often was the question asked by Christians, "Has Ban Chim trusted in Jesus yet?" Each one tried to explain her or his own difficulty by telling the experience of self. Instead of helping her, this increased the trouble, for she then tried to think and feel just as each one said he or she did. Hers was really a singular case, yet not entirely different from any other. The author baptized one woman in China who had for eleven years been an inquirer.

Instead of feeling the burden of her sin less, Leng Tso was more troubled by it the longer she prayed and hoped. Sometimes she felt that she could not endure it any longer, and told a friend one day,

"I cannot bear this burden of sin any more."

"Why do you try?" asked the woman. "Do you think that you can do it better than Jesus? It is his work, and you are taking it away from him."

"But it is fast to me, and I cannot get to Jesus to let him take it. I am like a poor old slave-woman standing at the bottom of a long steep, slippery hill, and up that hill I must carry a load that is almost breaking my back. On the top stands One who can take away the burden, and

a path leads to him, but the way is dark and I cannot find the road."

"You are wrong," said the woman; "Jesus is not on the hill."

"Where is he, then?" asked Leng Tso. "It seems to me that he is there."

"No," answered the other; "Jesus is behind you, and you are turning your back on him. You are trying to do what you cannot, and so are going away from Jesus."

"Is that true? Have I been unable to see him and to get rid of my burden because I turn away from him?" asked Leng Tso as the light began to break upon her mind.

"Yes; you cannot climb the hill with your load. Jesus is behind you to take it off. You need not go to Jesus. He is near you, and waiting to hear you say, 'Here, Lord! take the burden; I cannot carry it. I can do nothing; do all for me.' Why not let him, now? That is faith; that is trusting him."

"Is it so easy as that? And is that all I must do?"

"Yes, all. What more can you do?"

"Nothing. But I have tried to do much. Then I need not climb the hill at all to find Jesus?"

"No. Why should you, when Jesus has come down to find you?"

"I see it now! I see it now! Why did I not

know this before? Shall we pray, and I let Jesus take the burden right off?"

The two women kneeled in prayer. Each one prayed; and as her friend was asking that all the burden might be taken away, Leng Tso could not help whispering to her joyfully,

"He is doing it! I let him."

A happy woman was Leng Tso when she arose from her knees. She felt so light-hearted that she could not help putting her hands again and again to her shoulders, as if to make sure that no burden was there.

"It seems," said she, "as though I had been a slave in chains all my life, and at once I am set free and all my chains gone. It is as though the sun suddenly shone overhead at midnight."

The long struggle was over, and Leng Tso was happy. She knew now that Jesus loved her, that he had died for her, and that her sins were forgiven. The loneliness had almost gone, and the longing for her children and her friends was partly swallowed up in the great joy of having found Jesus as her Saviour. Everything was bright now. She could walk through the deserted streets of the city, and even visit the ruins of her old home, and yet find something to give her joy. She wished to tell every one whom she saw how happy she was, that God loved her, that Jesus had died for her and had made her his own.

Leng Tso was not satisfied with being a Chris-

tian herself: she was anxious that everybody whom she knew should love Christ too. Had she dared, she would gladly have gone into the streets and gathered the people together to tell them of the Saviour's love; but this she knew would be very improper, according to Chinese ideas. She could not be idle; so she went to the homes of her friends and spent many an hour, when not obliged to work, in talking to them of the love of Jesus and the way to be saved. Some listened and others turned the conversation to other things, while a few said that they did not care to hear about a foreign religion; their own was good enough; besides, it was not right to give up the religion of their fathers.

She tried to get her friends to go with her to the chapel, and not a few women were thus led to hear the truth preached, and some to believe it. This chapel, like many of the Christian churches in Southern China, had a small space for women back and on either side of the preacher, divided off by a board partition, with a movable curtain at the top just high enough to hide them from the men in the audience, but not too high to hinder their seeing the preacher, who stood on a raised platform. Into this place Leng Tso not only invited women to come and hear the truth, but here she would sit and talk with them about their souls.

Since Leng Tso began to learn to read she kept trying in the hope that she would be able to peruse the Bible for herself. She learned very slowly.

The written language of China is very hard, and, as Leng Tso was over forty years old, she found it all the more difficult to remember the strange-appearing words as well as their different meanings. After months of study she was delighted to find that she could read the third chapter of John without missing a word. Every day she read it over and over again to make sure of the whole chapter, so that she would not forget a single word. In time this was called "Ban Chim's chapter" by the Christians in the chapel, because she always read this when asked to read the Bible.

When Leng Tso was married she took the name of her husband, Ban, and was called Ban So; after he was lost, and as she became older, she was called Ban Chim. To us let her remain Leng Tso.

When she was able to read this chapter well she always took her New Testament with her if she visited her friends, and usually read this part to those who could not read for themselves. One chapter learned, and the next came easier; in time she was able to read much in the Gospels.

Soon after she began to attend the chapel-worship, and long before she became a Christian Leng Tso had learned to sing, and in this she took great delight. There are people in Christian countries who can sing more melodiously than she did, but not many who enjoy singing more or join in it more heartily. People who did not wish to hear her read the Bible or talk about the new religion were always

ready to hear her sing. Sometimes through the hymn they heard the gospel, when had it been spoken they would not have listened to it at all.

Leng Tso had found no trouble in securing work after people knew her. She always did her work well, as she said, to let people know that it did not hurt any one to become a Christian. She said that a Christian ought to do work better than others, not only because he had two masters to suit, but because Jesus helped do it. Poor work done by a Christian did not speak well for the Lord who helped. As she had no one but herself to support, she did not need work all the time, and many leisure hours were spent by the sick bed of some poor woman, preparing little dainties or nursing the invalid, and at the same time comforting the sick and giving the medicine of the soul, as she called the Scriptures.

Once, as she was attending a poor woman who had been a few times with her to the chapel, but was not much interested in the doctrine, the woman asked,

"Ban Chim, why are you always so happy? You do not scold and fret as many do, but act as though you had always had sunshine."

"There is a sun in my heart," said Leng Tso, "that never goes down. If all is dark outside, there is light within; and I live in that light."

"I wish it were so with me," said the woman. "It is rainy season with me all the time. If the sun is not down, it is always behind a cloud."

"In the rainy season," replied Leng Tso, "the sun is shining just as brightly beyond the clouds as if there never had been a cloud; so, if you wish to have sunshine always, you must get above the clouds."

"How can I?" inquired Lat So, the woman.

Leng Tso replied,

"When my little boys were with me, they often wished to be higher up that they might look farther away and see more; so their father would lift them up in his arms. That is the way it is with you: you are down too low; you must ask God, who is the great heavenly Father, to take you up in his arms. When he holds you up above the world you will see that the sun is always shining."

"That is foreign doctrine, and not of the Middle Kingdom," replied Lat So.

"True," said the other; "but if it make the heart happy, what matters it if it be foreign doctrine? Ours are Middle-Kingdom hearts, and it just suits them. It could not suit better if it were made for them."

"Do you think that it will always make you happy? Will it not become old and wear out some time?"

"No. There is something new in it every day, and I am becoming more and more happy."

"But you have not had so many troubles as I have. It is easy for you, who have nothing to trouble you, to be happy."

"I no trouble!" cried Leng Tso. "I have had many. My heart is all seared and sore with troubles; some of them will never heal. When a child I was sold as a slave-girl to a very cruel master. A kind man wished to buy me for a wife for his son; that son was a noble young man. To earn money to set me free and make me his wife he went to a foreign country; before he came back my master, in a fit of anger, sold me to be the second wife of an opium-smoker. He would not sell me to be the wife of the good young man, because my master hated him. The wife of the man whose second wife I became beat and abused me; she took my child away from me, made it her own and tried to make it hate me. When, at last, our husband had wasted his property, he killed himself. I was sold to another man; my boy was taken from me, and I never saw him again. I became the wife of the man who bought me. Of the four children born to us, one died, another was given away by its father and grandmother, my oldest son was stolen from his father, and my last boy, his grandmother and my husband were lost or taken prisoners by the rebels in the capture of the city. My home was burned, and all my husband's property destroyed or taken away when the government soldiers captured the city from the rebels; and now I, who only a short time ago had a family and was rich, am all alone in the world, and, if I had no strength to work, would be a beggar."

"Have you suffered all that?" said Lat So; "and yet you are happy! I never suffered one-tenth as much, and yet I am miserable."

"Yes; I am happy, because God has made me his child, and because he has promised me ten thousand times more than I ever had. I would rather know and feel that Jesus loves me than to have all the riches and good things that this world can give."

"Is it the foreign religion that does this?"

"Yes."

"Will it do the same for everybody—for me?"

"Yes, for everybody—for you. Jesus will love Lat So just as much as he loves any one."

"How can I get this happiness and good?"

"By asking Jesus for it."

"But how can I pay? I am poor, and have nothing to give. To get favors of our gods we must pay something or make some presents."

"Jesus does not want anything. It is all free."

"Free! Who pays, then? People always expect something for what they do, and we are taught that the gods are the same."

"The great God is not like the idols of the Middle Kingdom. They are not gods; there is only one God. What he does is all free: just as the water we drink is free, only we must go to the wells or to the river and get it, so you must go to Jesus and ask, and he has said that 'every one that asketh, receiveth.'"

"This is strange. I do not understand."

"Let me tell you: Jesus Christ, God's Son, paid the price, because it was too great for us to pay. And that is the reason it is all free: the price has been paid already."

"I thought that some one must pay. But why did he do it? What does he get back?"

"Nothing. He did it because he loves men. and all he asks is that they love and serve him. He even helps them do that, and then he pays them for doing it."

"Pays! How? What does he give? What has he given you?"

"He makes me happy, and promises to take me to his home when I die, and share with me all that he has."

"How do you know that he will keep his promise?"

"He has kept all his promises thus far, and is always better than he says; so I know that I can trust him."

"You say he loves men; does he love me? I am not good, and am not worth much."

"Yes. Listen, and I will read what he says;" and Leng Tso slowly read the third chapter of John until she came to the sixteenth verse. "There!" said she; "'loved the world;' that means all who are in it; that means you."

"Yes; but it says '*God* loved the world,' not that Jesus did."

"Jesus says in another place that he is God. But do you think that Jesus would have come into the world and died for men had he not loved them? Would he have said these words if he did not love the world?"

"It must be so. He does love the world; then he loves me. This is wonderful! wonderful! Do not talk to me; let me think about it.—Jesus loves me," said she to herself—"loves me; and he knows that I am poor and bad, and yet loves me! Wonderful! wonderful!"

In such ways did Leng Tso try to win souls to Christ. Sometimes when she was really in need of money she neglected to get work in order that she might care for some sick one or tell somebody of a Saviour.

Though a Christian, Leng Tso was not a member of the Church. The preacher in charge of the chapel at the Foo city was not an ordained minister and could not admit to the Church or administer the Lord's Supper, and for a long time no missionary had been able to visit the chapel. There were only two to attend to many chapels and a great deal of other work besides; one of these was an invalid and the other not strong; so Leng Tso, with some others, was obliged to wait long before she could show to the world, by joining the Church, that she belonged to Christ.

One Saturday evening Leng Tso's eyes shone with joy when she saw one of the foreign teachers sit on

the platform to take charge of the evening worship. She knew that the communion would be administered the next day, and then she might join with the Lord's people in remembering by this Supper the love of the Saviour. Early the next morning she was at the chapel, and when those who wished to be Christians and those who hoped that they belonged to the Saviour were invited to meet the missionary and be questioned and taught by him the truth and the meaning of baptism and the communion, she was the first one to take a seat. Her answers were so satisfactory to the missionary, who had talked to her only once or twice before, that he was ready at once to baptize and receive her into the Church, though he advised the others to wait until they had been more fully taught.

It was a happy time for Leng Tso when she was welcomed. At that communion she felt that there are joys of which the world does not know.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A JOYFUL SURPRISE.

SOME years after the rebellion there came into the chapel in the Foo city one Sabbath morning a stranger. Instead of sitting back, he came near the platform where the Christians were, and during the prayer-meeting he led in prayer. At the close of the meeting the Christians greeted him heartily with the wish "*Peng-an!*" ("Peace!"), and learned that he was a chapel-keeper and preached in a village some distance down the river. He said that, as some one was in his place for a few days, he had come to see the preacher in the Foo city and learn how the gospel prospered. He was surprised to see so many women in the chapel, and asked how they were persuaded to attend; not one came to his own chapel. Several men who were members of the large church in the city down the river attended, and, besides, there were quite a number of inquirers and others who were becoming interested in the gospel; but not a woman met with them. He wished to know how to get them to attend the chapel-service.

One of the men told him that the Foo city chapel had been open for a number of years, and that the women had been gradually brought in—some by their husbands and sons, and some by the women who became Christians, but of late more had been brought in by an active woman, Ban Chim, whose heart was always warm for the doctrine.

"Who is Ban Chim?" asked the man.

Leng Tso was pointed out to him. When he was told that she was a widow with no relatives, and spent most of her time in doing good, he asked if she would come to his village to teach the women the doctrine and bring them to the chapel to worship God.

Leng Tso was introduced to the stranger, who invited her to come to his village and try to do good there.

"I am not able to do much good," said she, "and there is far more to do in the Foo city than a thousand Christians can do."

"But here there are women to bring others to hear the doctrine," answered the chapel-keeper: "where I am there is no one woman hears, and no one to teach. We are poor and cannot pay you, yet if you will come for a little while there is hope that you may bring some woman to hear and believe the gospel."

"I am an ignorant woman," said Leng Tso, "and probably would be of no use."

"Yet you may try. The Lord may use you as his instrument."

"But I do not know anybody there, and it does not seem proper that I should go," she answered.

"You know the Lord, and none of his people should be strange to you."

Leng Tso told him finally that she would talk with the others and ask the Lord to direct her, and would then do as seemed right and best.

When the regular chapel-preacher, who happened to be away from the morning prayer-meeting, came, he was glad to see the stranger, with whom he was acquainted, and gave Brother Hap, as he called him a warm welcome. Afterward the preacher told Leng Tso that Hap was a good and faithful man. He needed just the help that she could give, and advised her to go with him at once. None wished to let her go, yet none were willing to hinder her going, especially as Leng Tso promised soon to be back to see them all. She made her home with Hap, but used her own money to buy her food, which, to save Hap So trouble, she often cooked herself.

Hap's wife, while a member of the church, and probably a Christian, was not suited to be the wife of a preacher. Not only could she not read, but she was very ignorant and not a neat or cleanly woman. However, she was like most Chinese women, for not one in a hundred can read, and

the most of them are taught little, if anything, beyond the simplest household duties. Hap So, since her husband had been sent to the village of Han Tay, never went to the chapel-service on the Sabbath, excusing herself because she had two small children and no one with whom to leave them. The real reason was that she was ashamed to go alone.

When Leng Tso came she was ready at once to leave the children at home with Hap and go along to show where the women lived and introduce Leng Tso.

Leng Tso soon preferred to go alone. She always carried her Testament, and would often please the women by reading from it. She was now able to read a number of chapters. The women listened at first because it was a woman who read, and many a time did they wonder at the learning of the reader. More surprised still were they to know that she did not begin to learn until she was forty years old. When any women were not willing to hear the gospel, Leng Tso would begin with the children, if there were any, and tell of her own and what had become of them. This interested not only the little ones, but soon the mothers would stop their work and listen too. Many a tear would the mothers shed as they heard the sad story of the childless mother, and they were ready then to hear Leng Tso as, smiling through her own tears, she said,

"But I will meet my little children again, if they are dead now."

When a child asked, "Where?" she was ready with the fourteenth chapter of John, to read an answer from that.

In such ways did she teach many of the women and children the gospel. Before long all were glad to welcome the pleasant face of the cheerful woman; and "*Ban Chim lai*" ("Ban Chim comes") was all that was needed to call the children of a family together.

To get the women to attend the worship in the chapel was not so easy. Some had one and some another excuse. One could not leave her children, another had no suitable clothing; this one's husband would not let her go, and that one was afraid that the gods and spirits would be angry if she went to worship a foreign god. But a number asked,

"Why does not the preacher's wife go? If we ought to go, why not she?"

Returning to Hap's house, Leng Tso told his wife what she had heard, and urged her to go to the worship the very next Sunday morning, taking her children with her, and thus set an example to the women of the village. They might go out if the children were noisy, or might keep them still with sweet things. Hap So readily agreed to this, and the first Sabbath afterward both women and the two children were at the morning service. At

the afternoon service two or three other women were present for the first time. After this Leng Tso had little trouble in getting the women to attend.

Leng Tso had noticed a young man sitting among the Christians each Sunday, and for some reason that she could not give felt much interested in him. He always looked neat and clean, yet was dressed in the clothing of a workingman. As it is not thought proper for the women, even in the Christian churches in China, to say much to the men, she had no chance to speak with this young man.

After noticing him for several Sabbaths she asked the preacher one day,

"Who is that young man with the pleasant face who comes every worship-day?"

"Which one?" inquired Hap. "There are several such."

"The one I mean comes in just as worship begins, and does not stay at all after it ends."

"Two or three do that. They live a long distance away."

"This one has a large scar on the top of his head, as though he had been a soldier and was wounded in battle."

"Ah! I know whom you mean now: it is Chiau, a young man who lives a number of miles away from here. He is a good man and a Christian. It has cost him much to be one."

"Has he a father and mother?" asked Leng Tso; and her eager, anxious face made Hap look carefully into the woman's face, wondering why she seemed so much interested in the young man.

"Yes," said the preacher; "Chiau has a father and mother. Rather, he had, but he has none now."

"None now? Who? where are they? Why has he none now?"

Hap could not understand Leng Tso's anxiety, and he slowly answered,

"His father and mother disowned him when he determined to give up idol-worship, and drove him away from the home. It is a long story, and I will tell it all some day when I have more time. He is now working for a farmer, and is poor. His father is rich, but will not even notice the son, much less care for him, now. But why are you so interested in this man?"

"Oh, I can hardly say," answered Leng Tso with a sigh, "unless it be that his face and form make me think of my son, Lin, whom I lost. But why should I be thinking of my boy all the time?"

"This cannot be your son: he has a father and mother living."

"No, I know that; but he does make me long so much to see my Lin. Doubtless he is dead, yet hope has not died with him."

Leng Tso could not give up thinking of the young man, and determined to get a chance to talk to him, if for no other reason than because of the interest she felt in him as one who had suffered much for the gospel's sake. The very next Sabbath she watched as he came out of the chapel after morning service, and, going to him, said that, as she was an old woman, she hoped that she might be permitted to speak to him.

"Your face reminds me so much of my boy whom I have lost that I want to be your friend," she added. "You have lost your relatives, I am told, and so have I. We may sympathize with each other."

When she spoke and told of her lost boy, Chiau's eyes were fixed on her face. As soon as she was silent he asked eagerly,

"What was your boy's name, and where did he live?"

"His name was Lin, his father's name Ta Ban, and our home was the Foo city. He was stolen from my husband by a band of robbers, who also took a large sum of money."

As she spoke Chiau's eyes sparkled, his face seemed full of hope and happiness, and when she ended he dropped on his knees before her as he said,

"My worthy, exalted mother, I am your lost boy—your Lin!"

"You! You my lost Lin! How can it be?

You have a father, a mother. My Lin's father is dead."

"What! Is my father dead? Alas, my mother!"

"Are you my long-lost son? How can you be?" asked Leng Tso.

"I am your son—your Lin," answered the young man, "and I will tell you all. Though many years have passed, I have not forgotten."

Leng Tso, as she looked into his face, saw it was that of her long-lost son; and as her arms were thrown around his neck and the long-pent-up love burst forth, she showed that it was a mother's heart that rejoiced over her child. The fullness of gladness, of joy, of delight, at the reuniting repaid the lonely mother for many of her days of mourning.

The story of Lin—for we shall call him by the name of his boyhood—is briefly told:

When the robbers had driven Ban away they hurried on, taking with them the captured boy and the money. After traveling a long distance they came to a village, where they stopped for some time. Here they sold him to a man who wanted a boy to adopt as his own. He took Lin to his home, and, giving him another name, made him his own son. Lin's adopted father was rich, having a large farm and considerable wealth besides. To all this Lin would some day fall heir. He was kindly treated by his new parents, and had all that he could wish.

For some years everything went well with him, but as Lin became a man he went to see some friends, and there heard the gospel preached. He soon became interested and anxious to be a Christian. As he stayed away longer than his father intended, the old man sent for him to come home. Lin obeyed. He hardly knew whether or not to tell about his wish to give up idol-worship. For some time he kept the secret, and whenever he could went to a Christian chapel some miles away. His father, hearing of this, asked if he meant to give up the worship of the gods and spirits. Lin then told him that he was determined to be a Christian. Very respectfully he listened to his father. The old man commanded him never to hear the doctrine again, yet he gently but firmly answered that he must serve God rather than man, and, much as he wished to please his father, he could not obey him in this.

"If you do not," said the old man, "I will disown you; I will drive you from my door; I will make you a beggar and an outcast. I give you time to think and be wise."

Some time after this Lin went to the chapel. His father heard of it, and again threatened him that if it were continued he would drive him from his door like a dog. Lin tried in vain to reason with the old man. He pleaded with him and prayed for him, and hoped that his father would yet allow him to be a Christian. He would not go back to

idolatry, yet dreaded to be disowned and driven from the door by one who had been so kind to him.

For a time Lin hesitated. He told his Christian friends of his troubles, and asked advice. They could do no better than repeat to him the words of Jesus about a man forsaking houses and lands, father and mother, for his and the kingdom of heaven's sake. These words brought Lin to a decision. He went again to the chapel, nor did he try to hide from his father that he had done so.

When they were together in the field a day or two after this the old man asked Lin if he had decided to give up the foreign religion and return to the worship of the gods of China.

"No," said he; "I cannot go back. I have given myself to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men, and to God, the great God. If it costs me everything to be a Christian, I still will not go back."

"Then leave me," said the father, "and never let me see the face again of such an ungrateful wretch. Go! Never cross my door again! Never enter my sight! All my wealth might have been yours; now you shall not touch a cash of it."

"Father," began Lin, "I will do anything you ask me—I will be faithful, as I have always tried to be, to you and my mother—but this one thing I cannot do. I cannot forsake the true God. I cannot." Before he could say more the old man beside himself with anger, caught up a heavy, thick-bladed

iron hoe, and with his whole strength struck Lin on the head. With a heavy groan the young man sank to the ground.

Not even looking to see whether his son was dead or alive, the old man turned away and walked to his home. Nor did he come back to care for Lin; he did not even allow any servant to notice the young man. Some Christian men, who had either seen the cruel act or had come along and found Lin, took him to their home. After some hours he returned to consciousness, and in time recovered.

Lin was now a homeless outcast, and for some months was forced to depend on Christian friends for food and shelter. No idolaters would shelter him, much less give him work. Had it not been for the sympathy and care of Christians he might have starved even after he recovered. At length he found work in a place where none knew him, and now he was supporting himself, and saving a little besides, by working hard six days out of seven. When he hired to work he insisted that he should have one day in seven for rest.

We need not describe the happiness of Lin and his mother, but add, as we close the chapter, that Lin is not the only one in China who has been driven from home because he became a Christian. The author has known others who were treated almost as cruelly, and who gave up as much as he for Christ's sake. A religion that leads to such sacrifices has something in it.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE NEW RELIGION IN THAU PAU.

WE have not yet taken final leave of Thau Pau. Let us look in upon the little walled village again.

Liong and Gan, who were boys when Leng Tso was a girl in the village, are middle-aged men now. They are troubled with diseases which the Chinese doctors are unable to cure. They heard years ago that in the city of Ha Bun foreign doctors had a hospital where medicine was given and the sick cared for without pay. It was said that many people who had gone to this hospital had been entirely cured. Liong and Gan talked the matter over together, and agreed to go to Ha Bun to see if they could be cured. Some of the people advised them not to go. The foreign doctors would kill them and cut them up to make medicine of, they said, for in foreign countries medicine made of Chinamen brought a very high price.

"We will die here," said Liong, "and we can only be killed there, but we may be cured. I have heard that all of those foreigners are not bad."

Neither Liong nor Gan would listen to the warnings of the people, and one morning they started off together for Ha Bun. They soon found the hospital, and were told that they must wait two days before the foreign doctor would come. This did not trouble them, as it gave them a chance to see the city.

Each morning there came to the hospital a young man who, the people said, was studying to be a teacher of a foreign religion that some foreigners were teaching in the city. He came to tell the sick people about this new doctrine and to help them worship the foreigners' God. Liong and Gan having nothing else to do, were very ready to listen. They were pleased with the singing. Liong thought he had never heard such fine music, and soon began to sing a little himself; but as he did not know the tune he was obliged to use one of his own—one that he had never used before, nor had any one else ever heard it; but it fitted the words (in fact, like india-rubber, it could be made to fit any hymn ever written). Liong enjoyed singing when he could do his share of it; so, reaching the book to Gan, he asked,

"Why do you not sing?"

"I am afraid," answered Gan. He was ashamed to say that he could not read.

The Christian young man, after the singing, began to pray. Liong and Gan looked and wondered where the God *was* to whom the young man was

speaking. There was nothing that looked like a god, nor yet like an ancestral tablet, in the room. Not only was the prayer different from anything they had ever heard in the temples, but the man prayed as though he was really in earnest—as though he meant every word he said.

After the prayer another hymn was sung. Gan thought he would try to sing a little too, for Liong was shouting at the top of his voice, but he did not know whether to sing loud when Liong did, or when the others did; so he kept along with moderation. He did not know the words of the hymns, except as he heard them, so he could not get ahead, and since he sang each word as he heard it, he did not get behind very far. No one laughed at Liong's singing; it is considered very impolite among the Chinese to laugh at the mistakes of others. Liong hardly knew but that he was the best singer in the whole company; he made the most noise, certainly.

After the singing the young man talked to them. Both the Thau Pau men listened. It was a new doctrine, and they wanted to know what kind of religion foreigners had. Gan soon lost interest, however, and began to think what the foreign doctor would do for him, but Liong heard the speaker to the very end. When the meeting closed he told Gan that the foreign doctrine was good, and he wished to know more about it. As for the foreigners' God, the Middle Kingdom had none like him. It was no wonder that the foreigners had

but one God; one such was good enough for any nation, and was worth ten thousand times as much as some of the gods in their land.

The next day the two men were at the service again, Liong more interested than before, but he did not sing quite so loud; some one had told him that he must try to sing a little more softly. There was another young man to preach on this day. Liong wondered what the men got for preaching. But when the speaker said that the religion of the foreign God was one of giving rather than of receiving, and that those who began worshiping him must expect to lose by it, Liong did not think so favorably of it. He had gained a good deal of wealth in Thau Pau, and did not like to think of losing it. When the preacher told what the foreign God had done to save men, and thus proved that this was a religion of giving rather than of getting, Liong listened again, more attentively than before.

"Strange," he said to himself, "that a God should give his Son for men, when he knew that he would get nothing for it! That God does not belong to the Middle Kingdom."

Thus for several mornings these men attended the preaching in the hospital, and after the first day they met with the people for worship in the evening too.

The foreign doctor came, and, after examining both men, with many others who came to the hospital for relief, he said that they could both be cured

in a short time. All that they needed was a certain kind of medicine, which he gave, and told them that after he had seen them for a few days they could go back to Thau Pau.

They soon found that the medicine made them better, and this made them think all the more favorably of the foreign religion. Not only did both of them become interested in it; both wished to become Christians. They asked many questions about this new religion of the Christian man who had charge of the hospital. He taught them all he could, and told them, when Sunday came, where to go in the city to hear the foreigners teach this new doctrine. He told them, too, that once every seven days all the Christians rested from work, and spent the day in meeting together to serve God. It was on this day—called by the Christians "worship-day"—that the foreign preachers went to their chapels to teach about this religion that the man said came from heaven.

Liong and Gan went to the church, and were surprised to find a large building full of people listening to the foreign teacher. He stood on a platform raised some distance above the floor. Behind and on either side of him, but separated from the men by a low partition with short curtains at the top, were a number of women, also hearing the doctrine. The more these two men heard of the gospel, the more determined were they to become Christians; and when the doctor said they might

return home, they went with the resolve not only to serve the foreign God themselves, but to teach others in Thau Pau to serve him too.

The people were surprised to see them home so soon, and still more surprised to find them so much better, and likely to become well.

"So the foreigners did not want you for medicine?" said one.

"No," answered Liong; "we were not good enough. Besides, we were too old and tough; so they cured us instead."

"They do not make medicine of men," said Gan. "Foreigners are wise and good men; they not only know how to cure sick people, but they do it for nothing."

On their way home the two patients had talked about the best way to tell the people of the new doctrine. They thought it would be best to say very little about it, but they would quietly destroy their idols and on the Sabbath day gather their own families together, and invite a few friends to join with them in worshiping God and keeping the Sabbath holy.

When the day came they met in a room in Liong's house. After telling the few friends present with them what they intended to do, Liong talked a while of what they had heard, Gan adding a few words now and then. Then Liong said that they two, with their families, meant to give up worshiping idols and the spirits of the dead, and that they

would serve this great foreign God, and they would like others to join them. Some said that it would not do—that the gods and the spirits would be angry; yet they were willing to stay and hear, while others were ready to try the new worship for a short time. If it was not so good as the old, they said, they might easily give it up. Liong had brought a New Testament with him, and one hymn-book containing a few hymns. Most of these hymns he had learned to read quite well; of a few he had learned the tunes.

Liong read a hymn and said that they would sing it; none but Gan understood what he meant. The Chinese seldom sing, and of course these knew very little about singing. But when Liong started, and Gan tried to keep up, the people got an idea that singing was something different from anything they had ever heard. Liong did so bravely that before he was through with the first hymn one or two wished that they could sing. They asked Liong to read the hymn over again and sing it once more. After singing, Liong prayed, then sang another hymn, and then, as he had seen other preachers of the foreign religion do, he tried to tell them about this new doctrine. Then people listened, and became interested. After the service was over they asked when another meeting would be held. Liong said that they might hold another that same day, and Gan could take the lead. Gan objected, but said that he would help; he could

pray, he said, and sing a little, but Liong could speak much better than he.

In the afternoon the little company gathered together again. Much of the time was spent in singing and talking about the new religion. The people soon learned to sing some of the hymns almost as well as Liong; perhaps he improved by teaching others. Liong liked to lead others, and, while he was really in earnest about being a Christian, he was glad that he was the first one to bring this religion to the village. He was glad not only that he might thus do good to others, but because he was the one who was doing it. Liong had not yet learned that he who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven is the one who thinks himself the least. He had only learned a little of the gospel. More than a few days, or even weeks, is needed to change a heathen into a good Christian. He may very soon learn enough to become a follower of Jesus and have his sins forgiven; but when a lifetime is not long enough for us to learn all that we might know of the Christian life, it is not strange that Liong was not yet as wise or good as he might be. Liong was trying to do better, and each day he gained a little; but, as he said, it was trying to teach an old ox to plough; it was very hard to learn.

Liong's wife did not like to give up her old religion. The gods would be angry, she said, or

the spirits would send some punishment upon them or the village, because a foreign god was worshiped there. When Liong gathered his family for worship she would excuse herself, saying that she was too busy; he might worship for the whole family. While he was at work in the field she would teach the children to worship the gods and the tablets, and in this way try to prevent their becoming Christians. Liong said little to her about it, but kept up family worship and the Sabbath service, hoping that his wife would some day become a Christian. She liked to hear the singing, and usually was at the Sabbath service. She was even proud of Liong's singing. Soon her children learned to sing, and they made more music than he, though not quite so much noise. Liong So said to Gan So one day that when the children grew up they would probably sing as well as their father. A loud noise she thought the best kind of singing. Some people who are not heathen think the same.

One hymn, whose translation would be something like the old hymn "Happy Land," and sung to the same tune, was a great favorite of the children. The first verse, if written with our letters, would be thus:

"Thian-tong long bo Kho-lan,
Eng-oah bo si;
Ho lang chheng-chheng ban-ban,
Hiong-hok bu-pi;

Gim-si sit-chai ho thia,
Tang olo Ia-So chun mia;
Jit mi hoa-hi toa sia,
Tit-Kau ban-se."

Its translation would read like this:

"In heaven above no troubles come,
Nor even death;
The good enjoy that lasting home
With every breath.
Oh how they sweetly sing,
Voices praising Jesus, King!
By day and night they sing—
Eternally."

This hymn rang in Liong So's ears, and the more she thought of it the more she wished there was such a place for her. Then Liong had become such a different man—so much more kind to her and to the children—that she wondered if the God to whom he prayed did not really help him. If it were so, then she believed him a good God, and much better than the gods of China. Without telling any one, she determined to pray to him too when no one heard her. She did pray, but the more she prayed the more she felt that she was not good, and therefore could not go to that happy place.

One Sunday after service she prayed aloud, and Liong heard her. He listened, and found that she was praying to be made better. At night, when he called the family together, his wife came too

and kneeled with them. Liong prayed the Lord to help each one of his family to reach the heavenly home.

"It may be," he said, "that some one of us wishes to go, but does not know the way."

Liong So burst into tears as she said,

"*Tioh, tioh! goa si anni*" ("True! true! I am thus").

As they arose from their knees Liong tried to tell his wife how to trust in Jesus, that she might reach the heavenly home, and told her to ask God to show her spirit how to believe in the Saviour.

The weeping woman went to bed, but was unable to sleep. She arose and kneeled down to pray; while praying all seemed to grow light around her. She forgot her sorrow, she was happy—oh, so happy!—now. She awoke Liong and asked,

"Am I to take Jesus just as I took you when we were married—to give myself entirely to him? Do I take his name, give up everything that does not belong to him, and serve him alone?"

"Yes," said Liong; "I think that is just the way."

"Oh, then I know; then I love Jesus more than I do you or my children—more than everything else. Jesus is the Husband of my soul, as you are of my body."

"Yes," said Liong; "and I am so glad that you love Jesus! He is good."

It was late before the two happy people went to sleep again. They did not know much of the gospel, but they did know enough to fill their hearts with more joy than they had ever before known.

For some months the people of Thau Pau allowed the little band of worshipers to serve the foreign God. Many objected that they ought not to forsake the religion of their fathers, or give up the faith of the Middle Kingdom for that of foreigners. Besides, it was not treating the gods properly to bring into the country another, whom the gods did not know. It was rebellion against them, worse than that of the Tai Pings, and some day the gods would punish it too.

Several families besides Liong's and Gan's became regular Sabbath-worshipers, and this made the idolaters the more opposed to the new doctrine. If Liong and Gan were foolish enough to wish to serve another god, they might do so, but they must not take other people with them.

This fault-finding increased until the idolaters resolved to put a stop to the new worship. So they held a meeting and determined to forbid any more worship in the village except that of idols and the spirits of the dead. Liong and Gan, with their families, were alarmed. They were not prepared for this. Had Liong been better instructed in the New Testament, he might have helped the others to understand their duty, but he met so many

strange words that he could understand little of what he did read.

It may be said here that the Chinese written language is not like our own. If we can read one book we can read another, because we can spell the words that we do not know, even though the meaning is not plain. The Chinese written language is not spelled at all. Each word has what is called its own character or sign, or we might say picture, and that is different from any other word-sign. There are many of these characters to be learned. Each book may have some that no other book has, just as in our books we find words that we have not read before. To learn enough to read *any* book in the Chinese language would take almost a lifetime. To learn to read the Gospel of Matthew alone, which has nearly, if not quite, two thousand characters, takes many months of hard study. Liong could read many verses in the New Testament, but, as there were many words that he did not know, he could not read a whole chapter anywhere. As he was the best reader in Thau Pau, and as he and Gan were the only ones who had heard the gospel, the people could not learn much of the truth.

When the idolaters told the worshipers of God that they must give up the foreign religion or leave the village, some of them said,

"Why can we not pretend to worship idols, and yet in our hearts worship the true God?"

Liong was not a coward.

"No," said he; "if Jesus Christ stands by us, we must stand by him, no matter what comes."

"And lose your land and cattle and home, and everything you have in Thau Pau?" asked one.

"Yes," said he—"everything. The teacher told us that Jesus left everything to save us, and we should leave everything for his sake."

Many times the Christians talked about what they should do, yet none of them were willing to go back to idolatry. Some would have made a pretence of worshiping the gods and have given money for idolatrous feasts, but Liong said this would not do: God wanted the whole or none. At last they agreed to say nothing to others about the doctrine, and to hold no more Sabbath services in the village. Thus they hoped to lead the people to suppose that they had given up the worship of the foreign God. They were to have their family worship as usual, but must not sing, nor must they pray very loud. This part of the decision was trying to Liong and to some others.

"And are we to give up entirely our meeting together for worship?" asked one. "Would it be right? Will the Lord be pleased with it? Besides, will it not be like trying to keep up a fire by taking the burning sticks away from each other?"

"No; it will not do," said Liong; "we must meet together. The Holy Book says that we are Christ's sheep, and sheep go in flocks. When they

pasture alone, wolves and tigers come in among them."

"How shall we meet, then? and where?" was asked.

"I will tell you," said Liong: "On the other side of the mountain, you know, I have a field that I work. Every worship-day we will take our buffaloes, our ploughs, hoes and other tools, and go over there as though we went to work. We will take food along and stay all day. There we will meet to worship God and sing, and I will read the Holy Book to you."

This pleased every one of the company. They were very careful to say nothing about their plans to the people in the village, and on the next Sabbath morning started for the field across the hills. There, where no Christian song of praise or prayer to Jesus Christ had ever been heard, the little company spent their Sabbath in worshiping the true God.

As Liong slowly read to them from the New Testament the people gathered around, as thirsty travelers gather around the tiny spring to catch every drop that trickles down. It was a blessed prayer-and-praise meeting. Their hearts learned that there is something more real in the simple service of God than in the grandest ceremonies ever celebrated in the idol-temple. No wall to their house of worship but the hills, no roof but the overshadowing tree, no seats but the green grass,

no other books than the one Testament and the little hymn-book; yet who can doubt that their worship was as acceptable to God as that which is offered in the most beautiful church or cathedral?

They prayed and hoped that soon the opposition might cease, so that they could again worship God in their own homes. Had they known the way the Lord would take to answer those prayers, their hearts might have failed them. But God did not show the way until he had made them strong enough to walk in it.

The day closed too soon for the happy worshipers. When evening came they returned home, carrying their tools and leading their buffaloes as though they had spent the day at work. Thus for a number of weeks did they spend their Sabbaths in their worship-place among the hills.

The idolaters watched the company of Liong to see if they would worship God on that following Sabbath. When they were seen to take their tools and go off to work, the people who remained in the village were glad.

"Ah!" said they, "we have driven this foreign religion out of them. They are going to work as usual; it will be all right. Let them alone; take no notice of them. Do not scratch a sore that is healing, or it will bleed again."

Lest the idolaters should be suspicious of them, the little band would scatter and not start the same way or at the same time from the village. Yet after

a time some of the idolaters became suspicious of these same people going away every few days and being absent the whole day from Thau Pau.

One Sabbath a man followed them at a distance. From the hilltop he saw them, not working, but worshiping the foreign God and singing hymns of praise. When this spy was sure of what they were doing, he hurried back and told the others what he had learned. On the return of the Christians at night the people of the village were ready to receive them. They accused them of deceit, and said it was known for what purpose they went away every seventh day—that they were still worshiping this foreign God.

The truth was out! The idolaters were angry, even furious, and the Christians saw that they must prepare for trouble. Their enemies would not listen to reason, and would allow no consultation. They must choose one of two things—either give up this new religion or leave Thau Pau. In vain did the Christians plead that they had a right to their homes and lands there.

"No," said the others; "by forsaking the worship of the gods and the spirits of the dead you will bring pestilence and death upon us. By serving another god you have lost all your rights here. Give up this god or your rights!"

Time was given until the next morning, when the Christians must decide. It was a sad and sleepless night to the little band of disciples; earnest, pit-

eous, were their prayers to God that the hearts of their enemies might be turned and themselves allowed to stay in the homes so dear to them. If God heard prayer, surely he must hear them, they thought, and not let them become homeless wanderers. But they had not yet learned that God answers what would be our prayers if we knew what was best for us.

There was no mercy for them on the morrow.

"Forsake the foreign god or leave Thau Pau," was the command that the angry villagers gave them.

As Liong looked at his home and thought of his fields, his growing crops and all his property, he began to understand what it cost to be a Christian—what it meant to leave houses and lands for Christ's sake. Not less trying to the others were the thoughts of leaving home, though they had less to give up.

"Will you come back to the worship of the gods?" was asked of them.

"No," said Liong. "The gods of our country are false, and we will not worship them again. We want a better God than they are, and such a one we have found. We mean to serve the great and true God, let come what will."

"But," said one, who really pitied the Christians and wished to have them stay, "you will lose everything—you will be made outcasts, beggars—if you follow this god."

"Then we will be beggars," answered Liong.

"We will take away your lands; we will drive you from your homes; we will put a mark upon you that will make you hated and despised by all who know you," was said.

"Then you must do all these things, as you threaten, but you shall not take the doctrine from us," replied Liong.

"You will be left without food, and you must starve," said the friend.

"True," replied Liong, "you may starve the life out of our bodies, but you cannot starve the doctrine out of our souls. We will not give up the true God."

"Then leave the village!" came from many an angry idolater. "But go out quickly. Never return!"

The Christians went sorrowfully to their homes to gather up what property they could carry, and to lead their buffaloes with them.

"No, no!" said their enemies, when they saw what the Christians were doing; "not a buffalo, not a hoe, not a single tool, shall go with you from the village. Go, but go alone! Your wives, your children, and clothing for them, you may take, but nothing more."

The buffaloes were taken away by force and led back to the stalls. Everything that they were carrying, except the most needed articles, was forcibly taken from them, and the Christians hurried

from the village with the angry threats of an enraged mob.

Homeless wanderers! For the sake of Christ these Christians were leaving everything behind them rather than forsake the new-found God. Were they not in earnest? Did they not believe in God? Their faith was not that triumphant trust that forgets in the prospect of future glory the present loss, but it was that firm trust that, while it feels the sacrifice, does what God says and asks no questions, leaving all in his hands. Outcasts—and that in China means to be despised, to be friendless, wherever they might be known—where should the wanderers go? They had heard that in the Foo city there were a number of Christians who had a place for meeting on the Sabbath and who were allowed to worship God as they chose. Hoping to find sympathy and some one to teach them the new doctrine more clearly, they turned their footsteps to the Foo city.

There is a brotherly feeling between Christians in heathen countries that binds more closely, perhaps, than the Christian tie does in gospel lands. When these persecuted outcasts found the Christians of the Foo city and told their story and their trust, they met a warm welcome. Relatives and friends had forsaken them, but strangers took them in, fed, clothed and cared for them, and thus proved that God does not forsake his people even in their darkest trials.

CHAPTER XXVI.

KHIAU.

LET us go back a few years to the time when Khiau met Leng Tso in the streets of the Foo city. The sight of her brought back to him a bitter remembrance of his disappointment and loss. When he turned away from her he hurried along the streets until he reached his place of business, hardly noticing anything, and thinking of nothing but Leng Tso. His partner, Sun, saw that something troubled him, and asked the cause. Khiau at last told his whole story, and said that he had just seen Leng Tso in the house of a business acquaintance named Ta Ban, whose wife she probably was now.

"Well," said Sun, who was the warm friend as well as the partner of Khiau, "if she is married, that ends the matter. Is this the reason why you have never married?"

"Yes," replied Khiau.

"But you were not bound to wait for her," said the partner; "since there was no money paid down, there was no bargain, and you were free. You ought to have got a wife long ago. You know

that she is married now; why not get a wife at once? You have plenty of money, and can easily afford to get a number one good one—far better than Ta Ban's woman, and one who will honor you."

"The wife of Ta Ban is good enough for any man; she is better than any woman I ever saw. I know that I might get a wife from a better family, but I do not wish any one else. I had set my heart on this one; I love her, and cannot love another."

"Cannot love another? What matters that?" said Sun. "What difference does it make whether you love or not? Get a good wife, and you will probably like her, any way. Not the half of married men love their wives; that is just as it happens."

"My heart is not a piece of clay of which I may make any shaped brick I choose," answered Khiau; "it is the house of my life. I do not want enemies there, nor yet ice to freeze my life. I want a wife for whom my heart will make a home, and who will make that home happy. She whom I chose when a boy would do that; since I cannot get her, I do not wish any other."

"Perhaps you may get this one yet," said the partner; "her husband may be willing to sell her for a large price: he loves money, you know. Then, if she is willing, the bargain can easily be made, and you have the wife of your choice. But if I were you, I would get a young woman who had belonged to no one."

"I did not think of that," replied Khiau, not noticing the last remark of his partner. "We might try, but I do not believe that her husband will sell her, for I am sure that she is a number one good wife; she was always good. One number one good woman is worth fifty poor ones, even though young."

"I will see Ban and talk the matter over with him," said Sun.

When Ban was asked about selling his wife he said he would not; she was one of the best that ever lived, and he would not sell her at any price.

"But think!" said the other; "you might get enough money to buy two young and pretty wives for yourself, and both with small feet besides. Then you might yet have money left over, for the man who wants to buy is rich and will give a large price."

"No," said Ban; "I am satisfied with the wife I have. I did not believe that there was such a woman in the world; I am sure that there is no other. Goddesses would be scarce if many like her were sent to the world. But even if I were willing, the mother of my boys would not be; she would not leave me and her children; so there is no need of talking about a bargain. I like money, but I like my wife better."

Khiau's partner saw that Leng Tso could not be bought, and he went back to Khiau, telling him

that there was no need of thinking longer of this woman; not only was Ban unwilling to part with her, but she would not consent to leave him, and of course nothing more could be done.

"The woman has probably forgotten you long before this, or does not care for you any more. Get a wife, and show that you are a man, and not bound to a woman who likes another better."

Sun led Khiau to believe that Leng Tso had refused to be sold that she might become his wife, and he unwillingly believed that she did not care for him. He knew, from her look and words when they met in the street, that she had not forgotten him. Urged on time after time by his partner, Khiau finally allowed a bargain to be made and a wife to be bought for him.

The woman he married was worthy of Khiau. Unlike most of the women in China, she could read, and was quite well educated; besides, she was a woman of good taste and culture. Her family had been wealthy, but misfortune came; the father died and left his family in poverty. Her friends hoped to engage this daughter to some wealthy and great man, but, as no good chance had offered, she was yet unengaged when his friend tried to get her for Khiau's wife. At first they would not listen. She was of too noble a family, they said, but the large sum of money offered, and the facts that Khiau was much respected and was becoming a rich man, procured the wife.

The two men were successful in business and rapidly adding to their wealth. As their business increased they sent agents into different parts of the country; one of these came in hastily one day from up the river, and told that the rebel army was coming, and advised them to move their goods and leave the city at once. He said it was quite certain that the rebels would capture the city, for they had taken almost every place they had attacked.

Khiau told his wife of the approach of the rebels and of what the agent had said. She urged him to leave at once, and said that the rebels would kill them for their property if they stayed. Neither Sun nor Khiau was willing to leave, but the constant entreaties of Khiau So made her husband think that it would be safer for him to take his wife away for a while. Being of one of the highest families, it was probable that the Tai Pings would kill her if they saw her. Besides these reasons, business did call one of the partners to Ha Bun and to some places north of that city.

Khiau went to attend to this business, and took his wife along; he also took a considerable sum of money with him for the business. The rebels appeared before the city a few days after they left, and Khiau heard not long after that they had captured and almost destroyed the great Foo city. The news that reached him was far worse than the facts, and Khiau dared not go back while the rebels

remained, even though he feared that all his property there would be lost.

One day, while staying in a town north of Ha Bun, he happened to stroll into a Christian chapel where a missionary was preaching. While at Au Lam, Khiau had heard of the foreign religion, and he knew that there was a Christian chapel in the Foo city, but he did not care enough about any religion to go to any of the temples, much less to hear about that from a foreign country. Having nothing else to do now, he stopped to listen. The text was "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The preacher spoke of Christ as the great burden-bearer for men, and asked if there were any present who were carrying a load of sorrow on their hearts, saying that Jesus would take it away. Khiau thought of the loss of his property, and then thought of his great sorrow and disappointment in losing Leng Tso. He did not think it possible that any one could take away those sorrows except by giving back what he had lost.

As the preacher went on and told of the greater burden of sin, Khiau was ready to turn away; what was said did not apply to him: he was not a sinner. Yet he listened; and as the missionary told one after another of the acts of his life, and showed that they were not only sins against right, but sins against God, Khiau wondered how that

foreign stranger knew so much about his own life. If the man knew, then surely the great Upper Ruler, whom the missionary said was the only true God, must know. Khiau was troubled. He saw that he was a sinner, and he wanted a Saviour.

We need not describe his feelings, nor yet his struggles. He became a Christian, was baptized and became a member of the church, and not long after his wife too became a faithful Christian.

After the rebels left the Foo city, Khiau, leaving his wife with their Christian friends, went up to his old home to see what had become of his partner and their business. Fearful as the news of the capture of the city by the rebels was, the reality after the government had again taken possession was more terrible. Khiau found the city almost in ruins. Where his own home had been, and where his large stores had stood, there was utter ruin and desolation. He could learn nothing about his partner, and it was quite certain that he with his family had been killed. No one could tell anything about the property. Whether it had been burned, destroyed in other ways or stolen, Khiau never knew; but he did learn that, aside from the money he took with him when he left the city, he was a poor man. He saw that it would be useless to begin business amid the ruins of the city; so, taking a sorrowful look at the remains of his home and bidding farewell to the few who remained of the numerous friends he had

left a few months before, he started for the village where his wife was staying, thinking that he might begin business there.

When he first came into the desolated city he did not forget to go to the street where he had seen Leng Tso. The home of Ban, as well as his shop, had been destroyed, and Khiau felt sure that Leng Tso and her family had perished in the capture of the city. Before leaving he turned to that street to take a last look at the place where she had lived. As he stood before the ruins of the house he thought of those happy days in Thau Pau, of his struggles, of his hopes and disappointments, of the lingering hope that he would some time meet her again and she yet become his wife.

"No," said he to himself; "it cannot be now. She is dead—lost to me; and she died without hope! Oh that some one had told her of Jesus before she died! She would have accepted him. She then would not have been lost to me. I saved, she— Where? But she is dead now; why should I think of her any more? I have a wife—a true, good, noble one, second only to Leng Tso. I will pray God to help me to forget Leng Tso and to love my wife as she deserves. But if I could only know that Leng Tso was saved! No, no! I must no longer think of her;" and he hurriedly turned away and hastened from the city.

When Khiau told his wife that all their property in the Foo city was lost she said,

"We have something better than money. By leaving our property in the Foo city we gained an eternal inheritance. Let us thank God for the exchange."

Khiau could hardly feel the loss of his wealth when he saw how cheerfully his wife bore it. As they talked together about the future she said,

"We have some money left; while that lasts cannot you fit yourself to work in the Lord's cause? When you are ready perhaps the teachers will find something for you to do, and allow you enough salary to provide us with food and clothing. Perhaps your wealth has been taken away to lead you to just this work. We have no family; why cannot you and I gather a spiritual family for heaven?"

"But what can I do?" asked Khiau. "I am not educated."

"I am," she replied. "I can teach you all I know, and you may study with the preacher of the chapel. When you are prepared it may be that the pastors will need you to be a chapel-keeper and to help preach. If they do not, you can then ask the Lord for some other work. While you are preparing we can both do some good in the village here."

"True," said Khiau. "Though I am not worthy of the exalted office of a preacher, or even of a chapel-keeper, yet I may be fitted to do some good; and one soul saved is worth more than ten

thousand fortunes. They might all be lost; a saved soul, never."

Khiau began at once to study. He had learned to read a little when a boy, and in business had been compelled to learn more, so that he was not entirely without education. At first it was hard work to study; he was over fifty years old, and it was late for him to become a student. While studying he did not forget the object of study. If any work in the church needed to be done and no one else was ready, Khiau was, no matter how humble the duty might be. If a preacher were sick or did not come when expected, the people soon learned to look to Khiau to supply his place. If any one were needed for a Sabbath in some small chapel, he was ready to go. The missionaries soon noticed his willingness and ability, and were glad of his help. To make his money last the longer, Khiau was ready to do anything that was honest if it did not take him too much from study and gospel work. In this way he spent several years.

It happened that the preacher in the chapel of the Foo city was changed, another taking his place. The chapel-keeper, too, was old, and it was thought best to send him where he would have less to do, and to appoint a younger man in his place. At once the missionaries chose Khiau. Telling him that they had but little money to pay, they asked if he would be chapel-keeper and help the preach-

er teach the people at a salary of three dollars a month.

"If you can use me I am ready to do anything. I should not ask for any pay, but, as the money we saved is nearly gone, we will soon need something for food and clothing," replied Khiau. "Three dollars a month will buy that for two, if we are very careful. I began to work for myself and to set another captive free on less money than that, and why should not I serve the Master for more, when my work will be to set the ten thousand captives free from an eternal slavery?"

It was a small salary for one who had commanded his thousands of dollars, but not for a moment did Khiau or his wife think of complaining. They were working for souls, not money; they did not expect to be rewarded on earth, but in heaven. Soon after Leng Tso left the Foo city Khiau moved there as chapel-keeper and assistant preacher.

Leng Tso seemed so much needed in the village that she felt it her duty to stay there for some months, and now that she had found her son she did not wish to go back until he could go with her. Every Sabbath, very early in the morning, he was in the village to spend the day in worshiping God and enjoying the company of his mother. He determined to keep the agreement made with his employer, but looked anxiously forward to the time when he would be free to live with his mo-

ther altogether. She resolved to wait until this time came, and then they two would go back to the Foo city to live.

When Lin had finished his work they started, taking a roundabout course for their old home. Near night they came to a village stretching along the water and shaded by a large banyau tree. Here they stayed for the night. Whilst here Leng Tso said to a woman whom she met,

"It seems to me as though I had been dreaming, and in my dreams I lived in a village like this, standing near the water and sheltered by a large banyau tree."

Upon the woman asking where she had first lived, Leng Tso told her what she remembered of her being sold as a slave in early childhood—that she could recall it rather because So Chim had talked to her of it many years ago than because she could remember the events themselves. But Leng Tso could not recollect the name of the village, nor yet her father's name, though she remembered the names of her two brothers, and of course her own name she had not forgotten. When she spoke the names of "Iau" and "Seng," the woman asked,

"Was it Li Seng and Li Iau?"

"I do not know," said Leng Tso; "I only know that their names were Seng and Iau. Seng was the oldest and I the youngest of the family."

"There is a village down the river some dis-

tanee," said the woman, "that looks something like this; it stands near the water, and it has a large tree too. That was my home before I was married, and when I lived there I knew a widow, Chiap So, who had two boys named Seng and Iau. Seng was the older, but there was no little girl."

"Do you know anything about them now?" asked Leng Tso. "Is this Chiap Chim alive yet? and are her sons still there? They may be my mother and brothers."

"I do not know whether Chiap Chim is alive now or not," said the woman, "but Iau was living a few years ago in Ha Bun, where he had beeome a wealthy man. Seng, I heard, had gone off to a foreign eountry, and for a long time nothing had been heard from him."

Leng Tso eould not help hoping that Chiap Chim was her own mother, and told her son that early the next morning they would go to the village of Kau Cham and see if perehanee that had been her ehildhood's home.

Early the next day the two were on their way to that village. As they eame in sight of it Leng Tso said to her son,

"I seem to be awaking and finding my dream true. This village looks as I dreamed my home was."

They asked some of the people if Li Seng or Li Iau lived there.

"No," was the reply, "though they did many years ago. Seng went to a foreign eountry, and

never came back. Iau lives in the city of Ha Bun, where he has become a rich man."

"Is their mother yet living?" anxiously asked Leng Tso—"Chiap Chim?"

"Yes; she lives in that large fine house beyond there."

Eagerly the two hurried on to the place pointed out, and, upon asking for Chiap Chim, were directed to an old woman sitting in an easy-chair in one of the rooms. Leng Tso's heart trembled with excitement, for she believed that this was her old home and this her mother. Respectfully approaching the old lady, Leng Tso, after the usual ceremonies demanded by Chinese custom, asked if she were Chiap Chim and the mother of Li Seng and Li Iau.

"Yes," said she, "but Seng has gone to the world of spirits."

"Have you no other children?" Leng Tso asked.

"None," was answered; "there is only one left."

"Did you ever have any others—any daughters?"

"Yes," said she, and tears came to her eyes; "I had one little one. It was my own heart born into life and into a daughter's body, but she is gone—gone for ever. Nearly fifty times the years have come and passed since she was torn from me and sold to a stranger, that we might have food to keep us from starving. It was a terrible famine! Desolation was everywhere, but the greatest desolation

was in the mother's heart when she missed the rain and sunshine of her life."

"What was the name of the little girl?" asked Leng Tso, hardly able to control her voice or keep from throwing herself on the neck of her mother, for such she believed Chiap Chim to be.

"Her name was Leng Tso," said the mother, "and she was my brightness; but my brightness quickly passed away."

"Mother! my mother!" sobbed Leng Tso as she threw herself on her mother's neck. "I am Leng Tso! Your little girl has come back to her mother's heart. Will you take me again?"

"What do you say? You my girl? You Leng Tso? No, no, it cannot be! She was a little girl. She was lost long, long ago. I never heard from her after she left me. You are a woman and old. It cannot be."

"But, mother," said Leng Tso, "it is fifty years since your little girl was sold as a slave; during those years she has grown to be a woman. Years and sorrows have made her old, but hers is the same heart that was torn away from a mother's life and love so long ago."

"Is it true?" asked the old woman. "Has my little girl come back again? Are you the sister of Iau and Seng?"

"Yes, mother, the same; I was once your little girl. May I be yours again? Oh, may I?"

Slowly the mind of the old woman passed over

that gap of fifty years, and she began to realize that the woman before her might be the little child that was; and then the mother's instinct told her that this was Leng Tso. As though a child again the daughter was welcomed back, and it seemed as if the mother again bound the cords of her life, so rudely severed half a century before, to the life of her child. Long, tender and sacred was the embrace that held the child to the mother's bosom. Silently each seemed to be drinking from that fountain of love that had to them been sealed for those many years, and the souls so thirsty, the hearts so long starving for a mother's, a daughter's love, had at last found the fountain and the food for which they had craved, fevered, famished.

When at last the arms slowly unclasped and the daughter could look into the mother's face, she said softly,

"Mother—my own mother—God has been good to me. He has watched over me during those long years of sorrow. Let us thank him now."

Without waiting for a reply Leng Tso kneeled, and with her head in her mother's lap, as though a child again, remained for a few moments silent, as if she would have the fingers of God touch first the chords of her spirit and draw from them the deep gratitude that words failed to utter. Then her lips softly spoke of the joy and the thankfulness that were thrilling her soul. When she rose from her knees and looked again in the aged face

of her mother, she saw that a look of sorrow was there—sorrow shading the joy.

"Has my daughter come back a worshiper of the foreign God too?" she said mournfully. "Iau has deserted the worship of his fathers, and his children are following in his steps. Now Leng Tso comes to me a worshiper of the same God. Oh, who will care for the spirit of the poor old woman when she passes beyond the house and the banyan-shade and the cooling waters? When the light grows dim and the shadows of the spirit-world thicken around her, when in the strange dark land she seeks a path in vain, when her naked body fails to find clothing, and her thirsty spirit is parched for water, and her hungry soul starves for lack of food, will she have no children on earth to light her in the dark way, none to clothe, none to feed, not one to give drink to the parched spirit? Oh, my children, can you so desert her who gave you life?"

"Mother, dear mother," said Leng Tso, "there is a world beyond death that is far better than that gloomy land of which you speak. There the souls need no care from those who remain in this life, but are far better cared for than they were in this world."

"Ah! that is the foreign religion," said the mother. "Iau has told me of it—his son has; but I am too old to change now."

"Mother, you are not too old. I was more than

forty years old when I first heard it, and if I were a hundred years old I know that I would not be too old to change. It is just the religion for those who are old."

"So Iau has told me. But I don't wish to change. Yet—yet I did tell Iau," said the old woman, as though recalling something that was not pleasant to her, "that I would change if the foreign God brought my Leng Tso back to me. Iau said that he and his family would pray to his God for me, and would pray, too, that you might be brought back. Now you have come back, can it be that Iau's God has brought you?"

"Yes, mother, he has. I have prayed to see you again if you were yet alive, and God has brought me to you."

The appearance of her daughter, and seemingly in answer to the prayers of her children to the foreign God, after she herself had prayed so many years in vain to idols, almost convinced the mother that the foreigners' God was the true God, and her own false.

Leng Tso, in the excitement of meeting her mother, had forgotten to introduce Lin, who remained outside. When he was brought in and had been warmly welcomed by his grandmother, the old lady asked how he came to have that scar on his head. This brought out the story of his own conversion and persecution.

"All of my children are leaving my gods," said

Chiap Chim, "but a God who will hear them and bring them back to my sight and heart is a greater one than any I have ever known; and a God whom my children love so well that they would die for him must be a better one than any I worship."

Leng Tso and her son, thinking that it would be well to let the mother's own thoughts lead her, said little more about the gospel at this time. Anxious to know the history of the family during those many years, the daughter was ready, in reply to her mother's questions, to tell her own story. Then the mother told what they had suffered.

Shortly after the famine the father died and left the mother to care for the two boys. For several years they struggled with poverty and want. The hopes of the boys that they would be able to buy back the little sister grew faint, and gradually died out. When they became men it was yet a struggle to keep starvation away, and Seng, hearing that money was made in the foreign country, resolved to go there that he might earn enough to support his mother, and, if she could be found, to bring his sister back. For some time he sent word home each year, and with it enough money to support his mother for a year. Iau had in the mean time gone to Ha Bun to learn the carpenter's trade. After a few years no news came from Seng, and the money stopped. Long ago Seng had been given up for dead, and the mother and Iau had ceased to mourn for him.

Iau, as soon as he had learned his trade, found plenty of work, and not only supported himself, but also sent enough money to support his mother. After a few years he married, and about the same time became a Christian. When he had earned a little money he went into the lumber-trade, and then took contracts for building houses, and soon became a man of large business. Now he was rich.

"This house," said the mother proudly, "he built for me. It is the finest in the village, and he gives me enough money to live as well as I choose. Iau is a good son and never forgets his mother, though it seemed to me that he was very cruel and wicked when he deserted the gods of his father. Perhaps it was wise. It was if it brought my daughter back to me."

Iau now had several children, two or three of them grown up, and one, the oldest son, the grandmother said, had become a preacher.

"He often visits me and tells me about the new doctrine, and tries to lead me to it. He is a good and kind son. Perhaps he is right. This new doctrine may be the one for me. I will think about it. You say that you have lived in the Foo city, and that you went to the foreign chapel there, my daughter. Did you not see my grandson, my Kin Liong?"

"Is he Iau's son, mother—Kin Liong, the preacher?" asked Leng Tso in surprise.

"Yes; he is Iau's oldest son."

"Kin Liong! Why, he is the preacher who came to the chapel soon after I began to attend the worship! And it was the son of my own brother Iau who preached to me the doctrine and helped me understand the way to Jesus! Had I not heard the doctrine, I would never have come here, and would never have seen my mother again. Oh, mother, God is good. I wish that you loved him too, and that you would trust in Jesus for salvation."

"Perhaps I will, my daughter. A God who finds my child, and sends her back to me after we had tried in vain to find her, is worthy of my heart. Some day I will serve him. But I am old; I must begin soon. I will begin now."

From this time Leng Tso's mother began to serve God. Not, however, until her children had taught her more plainly the way did she become a Christian.

For many days Leng Tso and her son stayed with her mother, and before they could send word to Iau to visit them he happened to stop on his way up the river on business. His surprise and delight to find his sister were only equaled by his joy at knowing that she too was a Christian. Iau then told her that when he was able to buy her freedom he could not learn where she was. Hou had given another name than that of Thau Pau as his home, and had not told his own real name; so they had looked in vain to find the lost one.

Those days spent with her mother were happy ones to Leng Tso. She could hardly realize that she was almost an old woman instead of being a child. She seemed to start her child-life just where it was broken off fifty years before.

She could not, however, remain idle even for a few weeks. Her well-worn Testament did service again as she went from house to house reading the truths that she had read so often before. Hardly one of the people remembered her, but her history was so interesting that each woman and child was ready to listen to it; and when it was told in her pleasant and yet touching way, many could not keep back their tears. When brought into sympathy with her, they were all the more ready to listen to what she told about the new doctrine. The gospel had been preached in their village before by men, but the women and children had not heard it. What Leng Tso said was new to them, as it would be to the women and children in thousands of villages in China, even though there might be Christian chapels in their own village. The customs of Chinese society forbid women to go out into the streets, and unless some one like Leng Tso carries the gospel into their very homes, many will live and die almost within sound of it, and yet never hear of Jesus.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS.

KHIAU had just become settled in the Foo city when there appeared one morning at the door of the chapel a company of men, women and children who asked if that were the place where people worshiped Jesus Christ, the great God of the foreigners.

"Yes," replied Khiau; "come in and sit down."

"Then we are right," said the man who seemed to be the leader as he turned to the rest of the company. "Thank God, we are safe at last! If a place to worship God is allowed, then we too may stay and worship him."

"Who are you?" asked Khiau as the people came into the chapel.

"We are worshipers of the great God, and have been driven from our home because we would no longer serve idols," was answered by the leader.

"Where is your home?" inquired the chapel-keeper.

"It is a village called Thau Pau, up the river, near the mountains."

"Thau Pau?" said Khiau, who could not help

thinking, while the leader was speaking, that he had seen some of these men before. "Thau Pau! and is not your name Liong? and are not these Gan and Sun?"

"It is so," replied Liong, for it was he who spoke; "we bear those names."

But it was quite certain that none of them knew Khiau. For the moment he could hardly keep back the old love for fun, and the wish to know what they thought had become of himself, and what kind of a boy they had thought him when in Thau Pau with them. But then, remembering that they were in trouble, and that he was there as a chapel-keeper and preacher to help all whom he could, he said,

"You have forgotten your old friend Khiau, have you?"

"Khiau!" replied Liong. "No; not entirely forgotten him, though we have not seen him for many years."

"I am Khiau," said the chapel-keeper—"the same who once played with you under the old banyan tree in the court of Thau Pau."

Warm and hearty was the greeting between Khiau and his friends, and all the more so that they were outcasts for the sake of Christ.

Khiau welcomed them to the chapel, and told them to make that and the rooms behind their home until better places could be found in the city. After they had told their story he gave his history, and said that, as he and his wife had only

just come to the city, they were yet boarding, and had no place of their own to which they could welcome the homeless Christians.

"But," said he, "there are quite a number of followers of Jesus in the city, and they will, for the Lord's sake, gladly receive you until you can find work and homes. The gospel opens the hearts of men and makes all brothers."

The more than twenty refugees found the chapel and the little room behind but a narrow home. But Chinese can make themselves comfortable with little room and few comforts.

At the evening worship in the chapel, attended by a number of the Christians, the people from Thau Pau found themselves received with as much kindness as if they had been brothers and sisters of the Christians in the city. These people of the Foo city had not forgotten how they had once been persecuted for giving up idols, and their hearts were open at once to those who were now enduring persecution. As many as could took some of the newcomers to their homes, while the rest still remained in the chapel.

The outcasts were delighted to join other believers in the worship of the true God. They almost forgot their losses when they united in the song of praise. But one song would not satisfy, nor two, nor yet six. Liong as well as others loved to sing, and felt that they could do it. Now that a good opportunity offered they enjoyed it with all

their power. It was not merely evening worship, but a service of song and prayer long continued, that they held that night. If the tune was not followed by all, and the time not the same with each singer, yet their hearts praised God. He does not care so much about the music, but does care for praises that come from the heart. It was this kind of praise that reached heaven from that little chapel in China.

The Christians of the Foo city, though willing to share what they had, were too poor to support the refugees, and one by one these found something to do by which they might earn their food, hoping that in some way God would enable them to return to their homes in Thau Pau.

Let us now turn back for a few moments to Leng Tso.

After staying several weeks with her mother, Leng Tso said one day,

"I must go up to see my friends and the church at the Foo city."

"My daughter, do not leave me," said the mother; "I have missed you so many, many years that I cannot have you out of my sight now. I cannot be long with you; I am old, very old—far older than most live; my journey of life has been in the long summer day: even that is ending. The sun is setting, yet the day that has been so dark and cloudy is closing in a clear sky. The sun is going down in gold and crimson, but I see another day dawn-

ing; another sun is rising that will never set. It will not be long, my children, before its light shines on me; until then stay with me."

"Mother, you are yet strong," said Leng Tso, "and I hope that you will stay many years to gladden and guide us by your words. Duty as well as pleasure calls me to the Foo city; let me go while you are so strong. Before many months I will be back to stay with you."

"I cannot remain many years," replied the mother; "for when one more year passes, I shall have walked the long life-journey of eighty years. Yet I am strong, almost, as many women of sixty. God doubtless has spared me in strength until this time that I might meet my child again, and that I might through her be led to know a better God than our land can give. My daughter, since I am so strong, why may I not go with you and Lin to the Foo city and see the brethren and sisters of the Church there?"

"Are you strong enough, mother?" asked Leng Tso, who was greatly pleased at the thought of taking her mother with her.

"Yes. I think that if we go up in a boat I can easily make the journey. If need be, we can call a (sedan) chair, in which I may ride from the boat to the home of some friend. I should like to meet other Christians, and tell them what the Lord has done for me, an unworthy old woman. It has been in my heart since I began to serve God that I

would like to have his people know it. And do you think, my child, that the preacher and the brethren will count me worthy to sit down with them and remember the Lord's death? Ever since you, Iau and Lin told me about that feast my heart has longed to take of it, that I may show that I love Jesus and have taken him as my Saviour. I can do little else to show my love to him. In this way I can at least let others know that Jesus will save old people—that none are too old to trust in him. But I am unworthy of his love. It is all mercy. How good is God, how loving is Jesus, to sinners!"

In a few days Leng Tso, her son and her mother started in a boat for the Foo city. Chiap Chim bore the fatigue of the journey well, seeming as strong when she reached the place as when she had started.

The three went at once to the home of one of Leng Tso's warmest friends. This woman was delighted to meet her old friend again, and glad to welcome Leng Tso to her own home. She was one of those whom Leng Tso had brought to the chapel and to the Saviour. Lin and Chiap Chim were welcomed for the mother and daughter's sake not only, but because they too were Christians.

After the story of Lin, as well as that of Chiap Chim, had been told, and Leng Tso had related her own experience since she left the Foo city, the woman, Kin Chim, said,

"We have had a change here in the church. A new preacher and a new chapel-keeper have been sent. The preacher is a young man, and we all like him very much, but we like the new chapel-keeper even better. He is a very warm-hearted man, and full of love to the Lord's work. He is a much older man than the preacher, and seems almost as learned in the doctrine, though the preacher has studied for a number of years in the school taught by foreign teachers. The chapel-keeper is away now to preach the gospel in the villages, and will not be back until 'worship-six.'* His wife lives in the next house, and we shall probably see her soon; she is a warm-hearted Christian too, and is a wise woman. She can read almost any book. She has taught her husband, Khiau Chek, to read."

Khiau! When Leng Tso heard that name what memories it brought to her! But, as the name is not an uncommon one, she did not for a moment think that the chapel-keeper was the Khiau

* While the Chinese do not divide their time into weeks, the Christian Chinese do. They call the Sabbath "worship-day," and Monday "worship-one," or one day after worship; Tuesday is "worship-two," etc., and Saturday, "worship-six."

It is probable that the Chinese did once divide the time into periods of seven days. There was years ago, and probably is yet, an almanac used at Amoy that had the days divided thus. And, strange to say, their first day, which is our Sunday, is marked by two characters meaning "sun" and "quiet," or "rest day." The Chinese quite certainly many centuries ago worshiped the sun on this day, and also rested from work.

whom she had known. She was sure that Khiau had died long ago in the destruction of the city.

Before Kin Chim had time to tell more of the news visitors came to see and welcome the newcomers, and to greet Leng Tso again. They, too, had news to tell of the strangers in the chapel, but did not give the name of the village from which the people had come. Hardly had these visitors departed when Khiau's wife came in. She and Leng Tso were soon talking together as though they had always been friends. Since she came to the Foo city, Khiau So had heard so much about Leng Tso that at first she was almost disappointed to find her so plain in her appearance and nothing but a large-footed woman. Yet she was too polite to seem to notice anything in Leng Tso's appearance.

Before long she felt that the large-footed woman was as truly a lady as if she had been brought up in the most cultured family of China. Leng Tso had seen much more of the world than most Chinese women, and her life of sorrow, added to her most loving nature, now sanctified by a Christian spirit, made her appear to her acquaintances as a refined lady.

The hearts of both women were full of Christian love, and each saw that in the other was a true and deep piety not only, but a burning anxiety for the souls of those around them. Not until now had either woman found another to sympathize fully

with her in a purpose that was taking control of the heart of each.

Leng Tso's sorrowful life had taught her that the lot of woman in China was a wretched one. She knew well, too, that idolatry and superstition were holding the women in a worse and more soul-crushing slavery than that which custom imposed on them.

Khiau So's experience had not been so sad, but she had heard much, when yet in her father's house, of the wretched condition of women among the lower classes; and since she had been reduced to poverty, and had mingled with the poor, she had seen how pitiful is the lot of most women in China. She had long known that the laws and customs, instead of improving the condition of woman, tend to make it worse. Since she had become a Christian and seen how few women, compared with the men, are followers of Christ, she felt that Chinese customs were having an effect even on the Church. At first she hoped that the gospel would raise the condition of the women, but, as she thought how custom shut them out from hearing the truth, she felt that the gospel must be presented in some other way.

Leng Tso, rising from the lower classes, and Khiau So, coming down from the higher, met on middle ground. Each had the same story to tell of the needs of women in China, and each believed that the only remedy was in the gospel. Yet each

felt that other workers were needed. Men might teach the men, but they could reach few of the women, and these the mothers of children already grown. Whilst the men were worshiping in the chapels the mothers would be at home teaching their young children to worship idols. What some missionaries have failed to see, and all have been almost powerless to remedy, these two women saw, and they had determined to try a remedy. It was to teach the women in their homes—to train women who would do a work that no man could do.

Of these things did the two women talk until each one respected the other more than any woman she had ever met. If Leng Tso admired Khiau So's learning, Khiau So no less admired the good sense of Leng Tso. Each felt that in the other there was a noble soul.

After a long talk Khiau So rose to go. Before starting she asked,

"Have you seen the Christians who have lately come from Thau Pau?"

"From Thau Pau?" asked Leng Tso in surprise. "I heard that some who had been driven from their home had come here to worship God, but no one told me that they were from Thau Pau. I lived there when I was a girl; perhaps I know them. Who are they?"

"You lived in Thau Pau?" said Khian So, surprised in turn. "That is my husband's birthplace. Did you know him—Le Khiau?"

"Khiau? Le Khiau your husband? Know him? know Khiau? Yes." The last words she said so softly, so sadly, that Khiau So saw that there was something that gave Leng Tso pain; so with a kind word of parting she left the house.

Khiau alive! Khiau married! Khiau near her, but the husband of another! Khiau, the good man whom all loved! What resurrections there were in the heart of Leng Tso! She had given him up years ago, and thought that he was forgotten except as the memory of cherished friends lives long after they are dead.

No mortal knew of the trial in Leng Tso's heart that night. Excusing herself, she went to a room alone, and there the old struggle was renewed, this time to be settled for ever. A Stronger than woman was on her side, and at last she gained the victory. Her lifelong love for Khiau was not slain, nor yet made a captive watching for an opportunity to break from its bondage; it was exalted into the highest love, next to the love for God, that the human soul can feel on earth—a love that impelled her to give herself, with Khiau and his faithful wife, to the one great soul-thrilling passion of saving souls for eternity. This victory was given her from above.

She could now think calmly of Khiau as married to another; she could even admire his cultivated wife. As she thought how much more efficient such a companion would make him, she

could even feel thankful that Khiau had so superior a wife. We do not mean to say she loved Khiau now merely as a friend or even as a brother, we cannot describe or name the feeling with which she regarded him. In her thoughts Khiau was henceforth not alone, nor were he and his wife only associated. In thoughts of them she was also present. It was no longer two, but three; and the three had one common purpose—saving souls.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CLOSING VIEWS.

UPON Khiau's return his wife told him that "Ban Chim," of whom the people had told them so much, had come back, and that she once lived in Thau Pau, his old home, and knew him.

"Ban Chim, of whom the people have talked so much, lived in Thau Pau and knows me? Who can it be? Ban Chim? Have I been so stupid?" said he, suddenly recollecting the past. "How is it that I never thought who this Ban Chim is? Knew her? Yes, I knew her well;" and Khiau was silent.

His wife saw that some sad thoughts were called to his mind by the remembrance of Ban Chim, and said nothing more, thinking that if it were anything she should know her husband would tell her.

Khiau had so fully believed that Leng Tso had been killed in the capture of the city that it never occurred to him that Ban Chim might be Leng Tso. As the people praised her reading without telling her history, Khiau, knowing that Leng Tso had no opportunity in early life to study, did not

for a moment suppose that this helper was his old friend.

His struggle was not so great as hers had been, but the result was not very different. The thought that she was a Christian and so active a worker made him almost content to give her up. During all those years since the destruction of the city he had believed her dead, and, what to his Christian heart was far worse, not saved. Now, to find her alive and a devoted Christian, even though she could not be his!

"Yes, it is well," said he to himself as he thought over the past; "it is ten thousand times better than to have her dead and lost. She is saved now. She cannot be mine, but she is Christ's, and that is better. I am married to a woman who is only second to Leng Tso. Why should I not be content? Had Leng Tso been my wife we might both have been idolaters now, or, worse still, might both have been killed in the ruin of the city. Killed! Then where should we have been now? Better saved and serving our Lord, even though separated for life, than to be united for a few years on earth and lost for ever."

Khiau, as a true man and the husband of a woman fully as true as himself, felt that he could safely tell his wife the whole story of what Leng Tso had been to him, and of his feelings now.

"I knew," said she, "that you had loved another. Your manner told it, and, more than that, you are

a man whose heart must love some one, and must win somebody's love, as you long ago won mine. But, beyond all this, I knew that your hopes had been disappointed, for often in your sleep you would call the name of 'Leng Tso,' and beg her to come back to you, or command some one not to abuse your Leng Tso."

"You knew all this? Why did not you tell me?" asked her husband.

"Because I saw that you had enough trouble, and I knew that you were far kinder to me than most husbands are to their wives, so I was content."

"But did not your heart turn away from me?"

"Why should it? You did not turn from me. It was only in your dreams that you spoke of this. Besides, I meant to make your life as happy for you as I could, that the sorrows of the past might be buried so deeply by present joys that even memory could not bring them back."

"How shall I act toward her now?" asked Khiau. "How will you treat her?"

"I will treat her as one worthy the love of the noblest man I have ever met, and so should you. She cannot be your wife while I live and we obey God, and I am certain that she is too good to think of coming between us. I have too much confidence in you both to give myself one troubled thought about the old relations between you."

When Khiau and Leng Tso met, if they had any feeling of sadness, none knew it. At Khiau

So's suggestion to her husband, he and Leng Tso spoke freely of the past, that, as she said, they might be free from embarrassment and might understand each other entirely. It was a wise suggestion. None but the three knew the secret that bound together this trio of workers. Each understood and thoroughly sympathized with the other two, and each one thought the others the more noble and self-sacrificing.

But, as this is our last chapter, the few things that remain to be said must be told briefly.

Leng Tso was not more glad to meet her old friends from Thau Pau than were they to see her. They were surprised to find that the Ban Chim of whom they had heard so often was the slave-girl Leng Tso whom they had known in Thau Pau. When they met together, Khiau, Leng Tso and the others from the old village, for the first time in the chapel, it was a happy reunion to them. Again the exercises were prolonged until, as Khiau said, it seemed that they preferred to spend the night in the chapel to going to their homes.

When the meeting closed, instead of separating, they gathered to talk of the old times of childhood. Khiau and Liong seemed to be boys again under the old banyan, and many were the outbursts of laughter that came from the happy group. To have listened to them, one would not have thought that most of them were exiles, driven from home and robbed of all their property because they re-

fused to serve idols. But their joy in the gospel made up for all their losses, and under all their fun and humor was the feeling, shown more than spoken, that they had something better in store than all that earth could give.

He whose Christianity is a living power running through every act need not say much about his inward joy and hope. It is not, cannot be, kept secret, any more than a light can be hid in an open basket: the light will shine through every crevice.

During this reunion of old friends Leng Tso asked what had become of Hou.

"Oh, have you not heard?" answered Liong's wife. "He is dead. He died a few weeks before we left. But he," pointing to Liong, "can tell you more about it."

When Liong was asked, he said that Hou had sometimes stood by the door when they held their service in Thau Pau, and seemed very much interested, but would speak of the doctrine to nobody. One night, after they had given up the service in the village and went out to the hills to worship God on the Sabbath, Hou came to Liong's house and asked him if they had given up that worship. Liong said that the people did not want it held in the village, and so they had been obliged to stop, but did not trust Hou enough to tell about the meetings over the hills.

"Is it not a true religion?" asked Hou. "I wish that it were, and that you could hold the meet-

ings again. The gods and the worship of the spirits do not satisfy me."

Without saying more Hou left. Liong did not know what he meant then, fearing that he was trying to find out whether they still worshiped the foreign God, that he might bring them into trouble.

After his death his wife told some friends that Hou, while sick—he was ill only a few days—prayed to a god whom he called *Ia Sau*, and would not have her pray to the other gods, or even spirits. Hou So had not attended the meetings of the Christians, and did not know that *Ia Sau* is Chinese for "Jesus," and that her husband had prayed to him.

The exiles had been only a short time in the Foo city when two of the missionaries spent a Sabbath at the chapel. At the inquiry-meeting they decided to admit Liong, Gan and four other men from Thau Pau to the Lord's Supper and membership in the Church. It was a happy day to these six. But the others? The missionaries felt that they did not yet sufficiently understand the doctrine of the gospel, and it was not quite certain that they were Christians; so it was thought safer to have them wait. Some missionaries in China, if they err at all with regard to receiving members to the Church, err in being over-careful. This care, however, is wise.

To the others it was a severe trial not to be admitted to the communion. As they saw their

friends taking of the bread and wine they could not help asking themselves, "Why are we left out?"

To Leng Tso's mother the trial was greater than to any other. When she was told to wait, she came to her daughter and asked, while the tears were dropping from her face,

"How long must I wait? I may die before they come again."

Leng Tso said they might be up again in a month or two, and the old lady was partly comforted.

"It was too much for me to expect," said she, "that they would accept me so soon, but I did wish to sit with the Lord's people to-day; I did wish to tell that an old woman had found Jesus, and that he would be just as willing to receive others. But the Lord knows how I feel, and it is much better that I be kept away from the feast for a while than that some be admitted who are unfit."

It was not long before Leng Tso had the pleasure of seeing her mother welcomed to the Lord's Supper and hearing the old lady say, after the communion,

"If it is so good to feast with the Lord on earth, what will it be when we reach heaven?"

A few months after this communion season a message came from Thau Pau, saying that if the exiles returned they might have their fields and all their property again, and live in the village as before.

This was owing to no change of mind on the part of the persecutors; they remained as bitter opposers

as ever to the worship of the foreign God. But the missionaries, through their consul, had appealed to the Chinese government to command the enemies of these Christians to allow the exiles to return and take possession of their property. Because of its treaty with foreign nations, in which it is agreed that no persecution on account of religion shall be permitted, the government was obliged to compel the idolaters in Thau Pau to receive the Christians back. The mandarins had delayed as long as they dared, and only when forced by higher officers, who in turn were urged by the foreign consul, did they direct that the persecution should cease and the outcasts be received again.

It was a more happy journey that Liong and his friends made when they returned than when they were driven from Thau Pau. They had but one regret—that they had now no one to teach them more fully the doctrine. It was not a warm welcome that they received, but to be allowed to return at all to their homes they considered so great a favor that they thought little of the ill-will of the people in the village. They were permitted to take possession of their fields and houses, but their buffaloes and much of their other property were kept by their enemies. Not until another appeal to the government had been made were any of these things returned, and much of their property was never given back.

As soon as they were settled in their homes they

began at once to hold Christian worship. Their enemies dared no longer forbid it, though they tried to annoy them in their services. Since they had been under the instruction of a teacher, the little band of Christians felt all the more need of some one to teach them, and a request was sent to the missionaries for a teacher. The request was granted, and Khiau was sent to be their teacher.

Here we leave Thau Pau, adding that shortly after the exiles returned five more of them were admitted to the Church, three of them women. And since that more have become Christians. From it as a centre the gospel has been carried to other places, until there are already the beginnings of several churches in the villages around Thau Pau. How much is owing to the faithful work of Khiau we cannot say.

Our readers may wish to know more about Leng Tso and others who have appeared in this story. Of some we can tell nothing more, and of others there is little of further interest to relate. Some may be disappointed to find that the author has not married Leng Tso to Khiau in the closing chapter. As the author is a clergyman, he might have done so, but he has always objected to marrying a woman to a man who has a wife living. It has been the purpose of the writer to tell facts about a woman's life in China rather than to tell a story that would simply gratify his readers.

The mother of Leng Tso did not live long after her return from the Foo city to her home, whither her daughter and grandson accompanied her. Her death was as a setting sun in a sky with few clouds—just enough to make the sunset the more glorious. Her clouds were that she had so late in life become a follower of Jesus, and had so little time to do something to show her love to him.

Leng Tso's son, thinking that he was not fitted for special work in the gospel, felt that he could do more good by becoming a business-man and making money to aid the work, and at the same time doing all he could in a quiet way to lead his countrymen to give up idols for the service of the true God. In this decision his mother upheld him, saying,

"If all the men of any ability preach, what will the Church do for money, and what for men to care for the work of the Church that preachers cannot do? If all the best men are teachers, the rest will remain scholars. Let all the watchful sheep be taken from the fold, and what will become of the lambs?"

It remains but for us to speak of Leng Tso and Khiau So. Though separated, they continued to be faithful friends, devoted to the work to which they had given the later years of their lives—teaching the gospel to the women of China.

After her mother's death Leng Tso spent much of her time in going from place to place reading the Bible and talking of its truths to the women.

Khiau So's home duties prevented her doing as much of this work as she wished. When Leng Tso visited Khiau So and her husband in Thau Pau, the three spent many hours in speaking of the needs of the people, and in planning ways to win them to the truth.

"Oh," said Khiau one day, when returning from an absence of some days to preach the gospel to other villages, "it is discouraging to work in this way. The men come to listen, and hear the truth gladly, but the women stay at home. And when their husbands return almost ready to accept the gospel, their wives turn their minds from it. Some who have forsaken superstition and idolatry, and are ready to give themselves to the service of God, are lured back again by wives and mothers. And when fathers do become Christians, their children do not very often follow. The mothers, who remain idolaters, teach the children to follow their own rather than their father's God. Even though all the men became Christians, the next generation would be idolaters. We must do more for the women. Bring *them* to Christ, and in a generation the Middle Kingdom will belong to our Lord. But how to do it is the question."

"One way only is open," said Khiau So, "and that is for the women to do as Ban Chim is doing, and I am trying to do as time is given. *Let women take the Bible and preach Jesus, a Saviour, to them at their homes.*"

"True," said Khiau, "but where are the women?"

"We must have schools," said Leng Tso, "to fit women for the work. Let the girls of Christian parents be taught. As our customs are, we must have men to teach the men and women to teach the women. Let the wives of preachers be fitted to help their husbands, for we have few Khiau Sos, but many Hap Sos who cannot read at all. We must try to urge the women in the churches to do more. THE WOMEN MUST SAVE CHINA. THEY HAVE BEEN MADE THE SLAVES, AND THEY ARE THE ONES WHO MUST REDEEM THEIR OWN! Oh that more women would come from the Christian lands to be teachers! If they knew that women are the true priests of idolatry and superstition in the Middle Kingdom, our sisters in Christian nations would be kept awake by a voice crying, 'Come over and help us!'"

THE END.